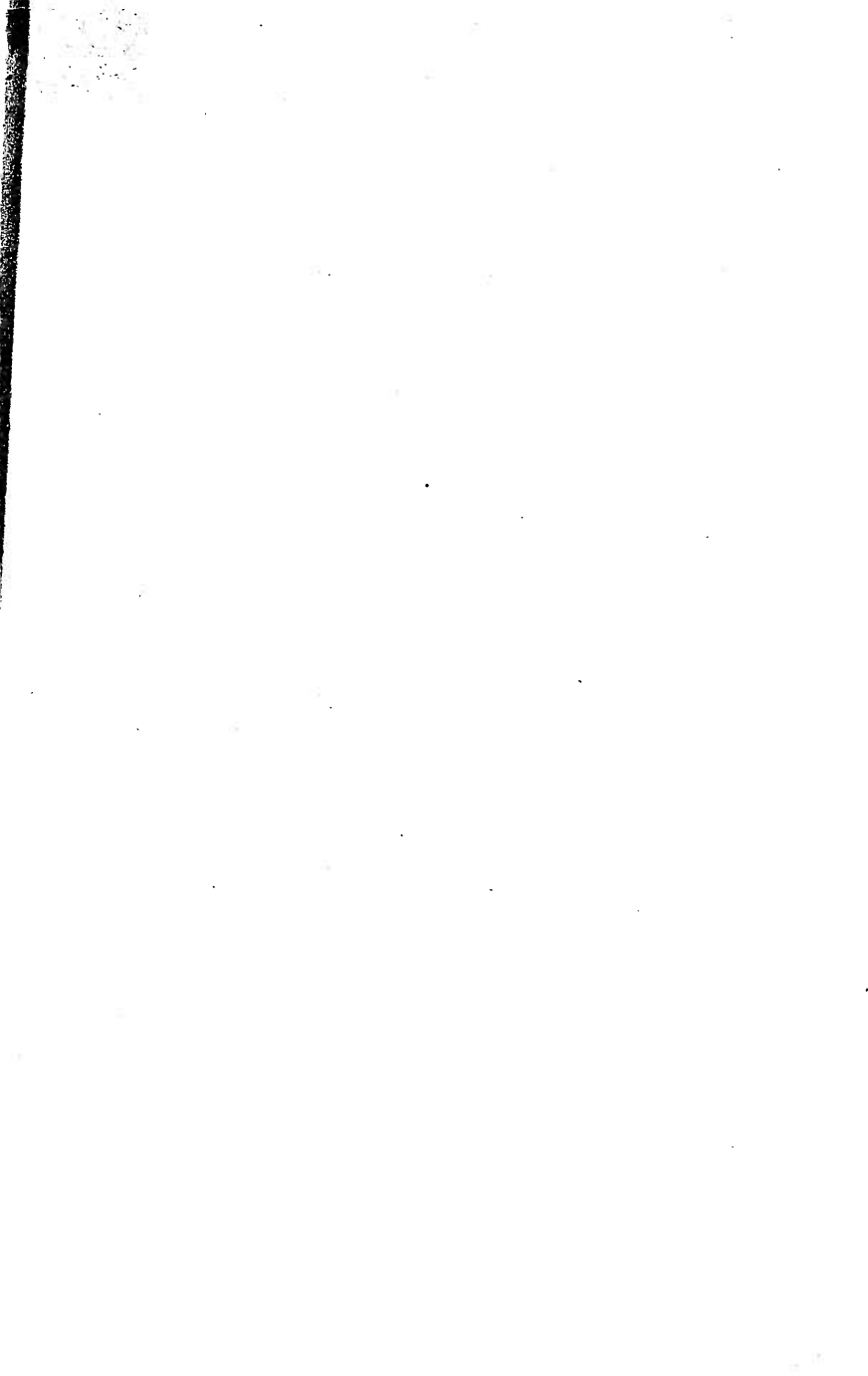
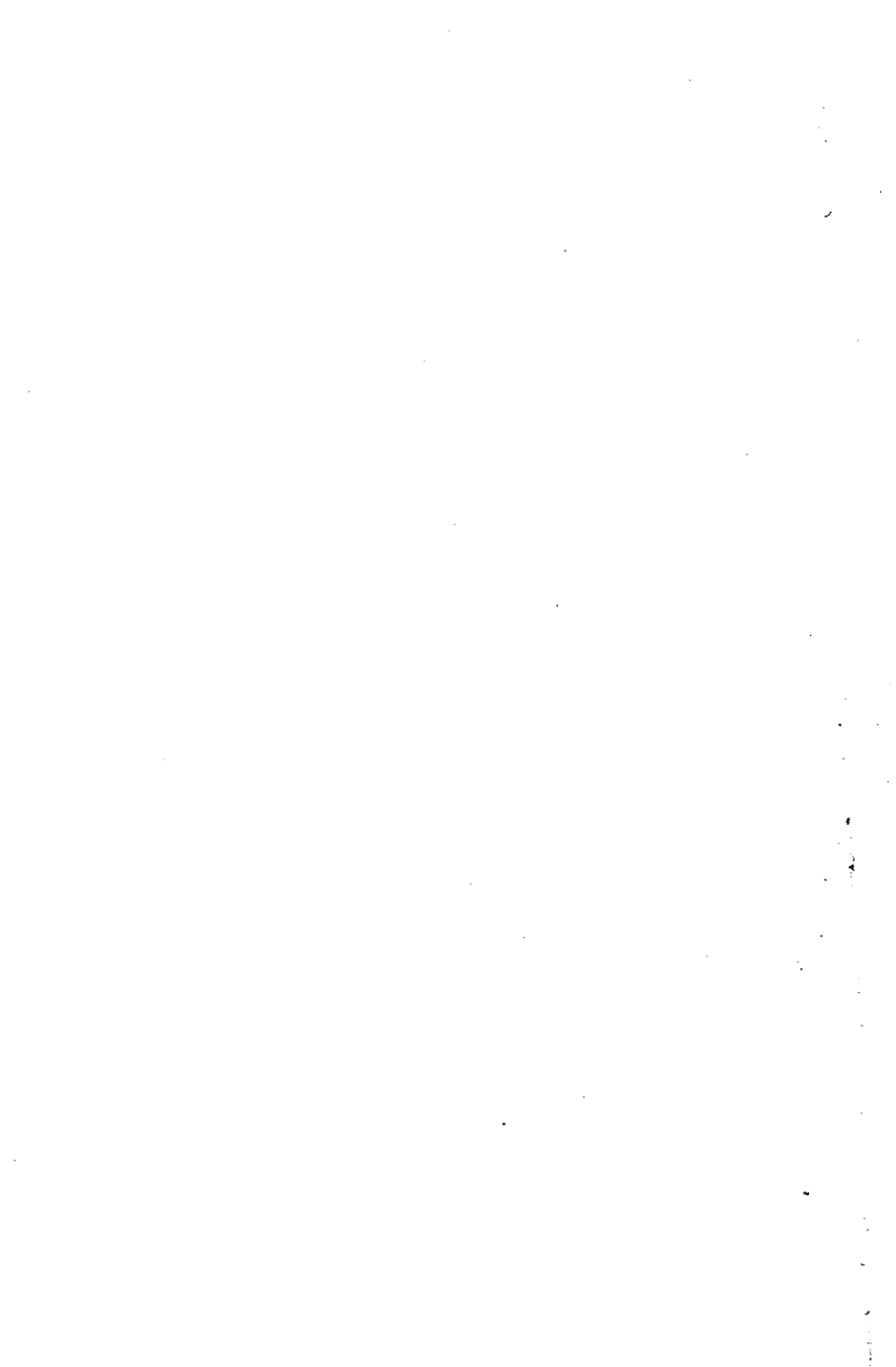


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A RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD
FOR UNRIGHTEOUS MEN

E. J. FORRESTER

A RIGHTEOUSNESS
OF GOD
FOR UNRIGHTEOUS MEN

*BEING AN EXPOSITION OF
THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS*

BY

E. J. FORRESTER, D.D., LL.D.



NEW YORK

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A RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD FOR UNRIGHTEOUS MEN

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TO MY BELOVED AND TALENTED WIFE,
WITHOUT WHOSE URGING I SHOULD,
PROBABLY, NOT HAVE BEEN BOLD ENOUGH
TO OFFER THIS BOOK TO THE PUBLIC.

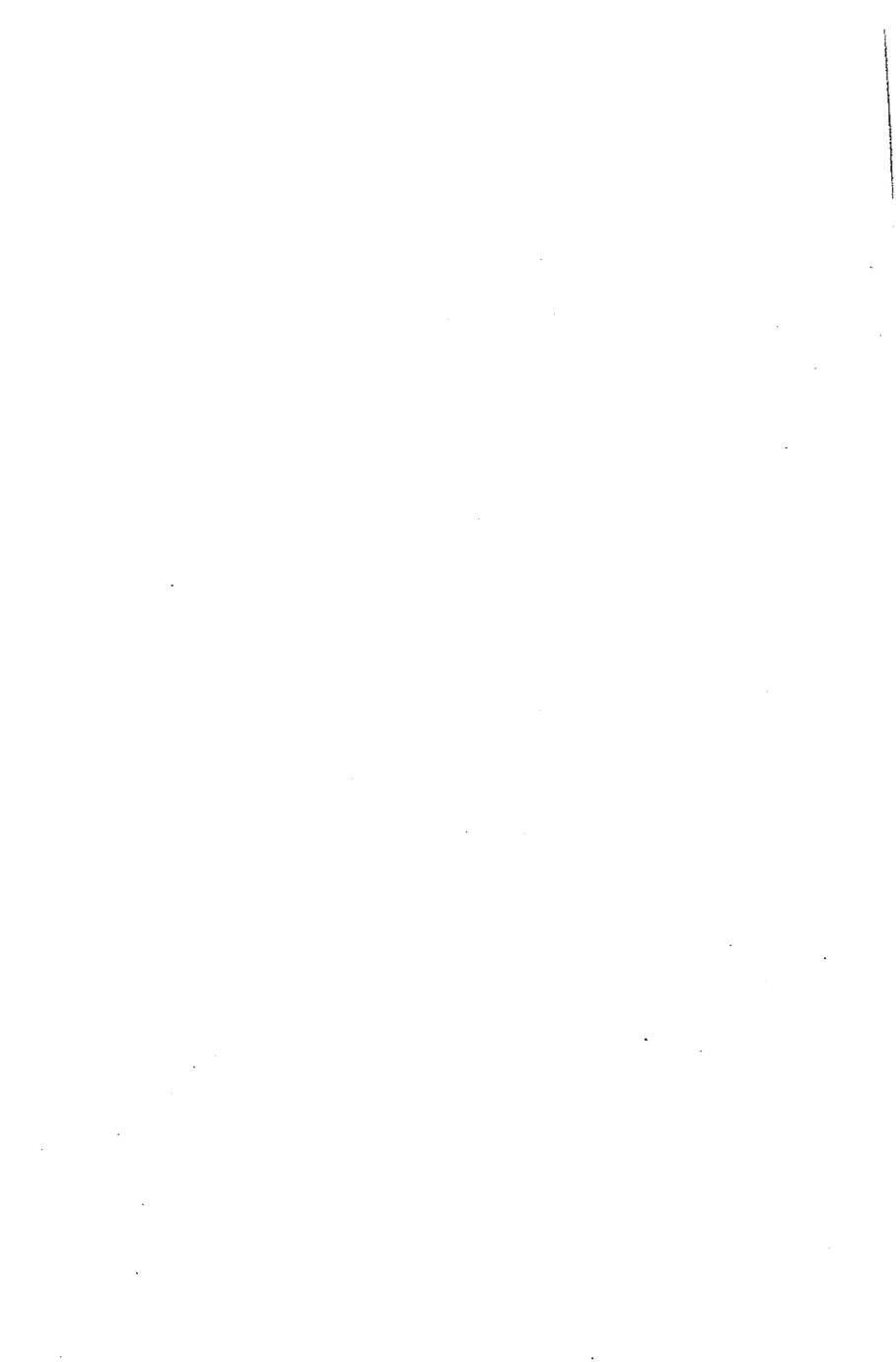
PREFACE

This Preface shall be brief. There is no reason why it should be otherwise.

The writer has hesitated to offer this volume to the public. He wondered whether it would be worth while. But he knew, at least, that it represented the mature product of what Christian experience he has had, combined with what expository power he possessed. Finally he has yielded to his desire to leave behind him somewhat more than the numerous fugitive productions, which, for many years, have been appearing in periodical literature, this desire having been re-enforced by the solicitations of friends, who, he is afraid, are too partial in their judgments. He now only trusts that the book may be useful.

The book will not be burdened with bibliography or diverting references. The purpose of the writer is to make a sane and intelligent exposition of the great Epistle to the Romans that will be readable.

In my study of the Epistle, my chief companions have been the Greek New Testament and the great Commentaries by Meyer, Godet and Morrison.



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A. DOCTRINAL DIVISION—HOW
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PART I
INTRODUCTION

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Chapter I

THE ADDRESS

I: I-7

This Address is in the general form common among the Ancients. That common form contains three general terms. It may be put in this way: A to B Greeting. The person or persons writing and the person or persons addressed and the greeting constitute the three terms of the Address—"Claudius Lysias unto the Most Excellent Governor Felix, Greeting." The Address in each one of Paul's Epistles may be reduced to this form. So it is with the Address before us. There are three general terms, each more or less expanded, but still all of the details covered by those three general terms.

The first term is "*Paul.*"

That is a large subject, and lures to extended discussion. Here, however, the discussion must be limited by the character in which Paul presents himself in this Address.

Those familiar with the other Epistles of this great Apostle will be struck with the expansion of this first term of the Address to the Romans, as contrasted with the brevity in other cases. He places "Paul" at the beginning, and then takes up the rest of the first five

verses with matter descriptive of "Paul," so that five verses are given to the first term, while the other two terms are put into two verses. He was doing what he regarded as an extraordinary thing, when he wrote this Epistle. All others that he wrote to churches were written to those which he had established. When he wrote to the Romans, on the contrary, he had never preached in Rome. The church to which he wrote this Epistle had grown up under other conditions. He did not feel, therefore, that he had exactly the same right to become their instructor that he had with reference to the churches of his own planting. Being a man of rare sensibility and courtesy, he would not approach this church, through an Epistle, without some justification of his action. Such justification he offers in this expanded description of himself, wherein he shows that sphere assigned him by Christ takes them in.

He calls himself a "Servant of Jesus Christ." The word which he uses to indicate his relation to Christ is a very strong one. It means "slave," or "bond-servant."

No man contended more strongly than Paul for Christian freedom. "For freedom," said he, "did Christ set us free; stand fast, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage." He never wearied of representing the relation of Christians to God as the relation of sons. "Because ye are sons," said he, "God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba Father'; so that thou art no longer a slave, but a son." When, therefore, he calls himself "a slave of Jesus Christ," he certainly does not mean to imply that there was anything in his position

that called for a slavish spirit. With him two things were comprehended in that designation of himself.

The first of these was Christ's ownership. He regarded that ownership as absolute. With him there were no questions and no reserves. Very differently he had once viewed the matter. Christ had seemed to him an impostor, worthy of the tragic end to which he came on the cross. But a great change had been wrought in him; and, as a result of that change, had come to him a thorough and cheerful acknowledgment of Christ's lordship over all creation, and his right to complete control of his people. He no longer had any doubt of the deity of Christ Jesus. From the bitterest hater of One who made claim so high for himself, he had been changed into a most thorough believer in the claim, and a most ardent defender of it. He had met the glorified Christ on the way to Damascus, and had been converted, and had submitted his whole being to this new Master, and nevermore doubted Christ's divine right of ownership in him.

Christ's ownership of him, based upon Christ's deity, then, was one of the things which Paul comprehended in his designation of himself as "Servant of Jesus Christ."

To recognize Christ's deity is essential to recognition of his ownership in us. If we do not believe that he is God, we will not believe that he owns us. Furthermore, the recognition of both his deity and his ownership is involved in a genuine conversion. If we have been converted, as Paul was converted, we will believe that Christ is God, and that he owns us. He who discards either the deity or the ownership of Christ has

never been converted, or he is, for the time, a backslider who needs to be reclaimed. When one who professes to be a Christian begins to discard either one of these two cardinal doctrines, it is because the old Adam is attempting to assert himself in some form. He does not like his subordination to Christ as Lord, and wants more freedom to do as he pleases.

The other thing comprehended in Paul's designation of himself as a "Servant of Jesus Christ," was his obligation to serve Christ. This followed, as a matter of course, from Christ's ownership. There was no escape from it; and he did not desire any escape. He discharged this obligation gladly. There was nothing of the slavish spirit in his service, nothing of the hold-back, or hate-to-have-it-to-do, or get-out-of-it-if-I-can, nothing of that sort. It was a glad, joyous service that he rendered. What a service it was! For about thirty years he worked in the face of difficulties that would have driven any ordinary man from the field. It took a great heart like his, charged with a great love, and inspired by a heaven-born purpose, to work on for the establishment of those churches that were to conquer the Roman Empire. He did it; he worked on; he conquered; and, to-day, the world is more indebted to him than to any other man who has lived since Christ.

Let him lead us in the service to the Master. We are under as real obligation as he was to serve Christ. Christ has the same ownership in us that he had in Paul; and that ownership carries with it the same obligation to serve. We cannot serve in just the same way; but we can serve in the same spirit. We may lay ourselves at Jesus' feet, we may put ourselves humbly

at his disposal; and we may earnestly ask him to show us how we may best serve him, and then cheerfully do for him whatever falls to our lot to do. Let a great love come into the heart; let a heaven-born purpose take hold of the will; and the life will be one of glad service to him whose Name every Christian bears.

Paul next describes himself as a "Called Apostle." Not only a "Servant of Jesus Christ," but also a "Called Apostle" was he. He had not undertaken the responsible work of an Apostle on his own account, but had done so by virtue of a Divine Call. He was called in a peculiar way. The Twelve were selected from among those who had become attached to Jesus during his public ministry. Paul was not among these. The fact that he was not one of the Twelve was sometimes used against him by his enemies, to discredit his authority. Though not one of the Twelve, he was, nevertheless, called to the Apostolate by Christ himself. The ascended Lord laid hold of him on his way to Damascus full of persecuting zeal, and made him both disciple and Apostle. At that meeting on the Damascus road, Saul said: "Who art thou, Lord?" and the Lord said: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; but arise, and stand upon thy feet, for to this end have I appeared unto thee to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee to open their eyes, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me."

He was called to a peculiar work. He was the

Apostle to the Gentiles. Why was there need of an apostle specially to the Gentiles? Was not the command to the other apostles a commission for universal evangelization? Beyond a doubt it was so; but they were to begin their work at Jerusalem. They were to be witnesses for Christ in Jerusalem and Judea first, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth afterwards. Their Apostolate was specially to the Chosen People, and through them to the world. They were to be apostles to Israel; and Israel converted to Christ was to embody the Apostolate to the Gentiles. But Israel failed of its Apostolate, of the high service put within its reach by the Lord; and hence it was necessary that some other agency should be employed. If those to whom a certain privilege is offered decline the privilege, God is not without resource for other agencies and other servants. In this case, Israel refused to hear the call. Those few disciples were subjected to fierce persecution by their unbelieving brethren. Israel showed unmistakably an indisposition to rise to the height of the great privilege. Saul, of Tarsus, was chosen to take the place designed for a regenerated Israel. The positions of Israel and the Gentiles were transposed. The Gentiles would come into the Kingdom first, and after them the Chosen People.

God's work will go on in the world. Neither the enmity of enemies nor the neglect and indifference of nominal friends can forever stay its progress. We need not fret about the danger to which the Kingdom of Christ is exposed. The matter that should concern us is the doing of what may be assigned us, the seizing of the opportunities which God gives us for helping

forward the work, lest he find it necessary to call others to fill the places allotted to us.

Paul, still further, describes himself as "Separated unto the gospel of God." In Galatians 1:15, he held that God had set him apart to this work at his birth. He, no doubt, has the same idea in mind here.

In the circumstances of his childhood, there are plain marks of such a destination. If he was to loose Christianity from the swaddling bands of Judaism, and to become the Apostle of a universal religion, he must be no ordinary man. There must be in his birth and training an unusual combination of diverse elements. Exactly that was true in his case.

For one thing, he must be a Jew of the Jews. He must be a man who had thoroughly tried the Law as a means of justification, and found that the Law only condemns—he must have proved that the capital value of the Law was to be found in its character as a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ. Such a man was Paul—by birth a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," and brought up after the strictest sect of the Pharisees.

Again, he must have some knowledge of the pagan world of his time, and some appreciation of its culture. That part of the requirement was met by a childhood spent in a center of Greek culture.

Still again, it was highly important that he should have the protection of the great Roman Empire, whose sway spread over the whole field in which he would work. That was secured to him by his possession of Roman citizenship. Wherever he went, he was under the protection of the government of Rome.

The Apostle's feelings mount as he contemplates the

position in which he has thus been placed. This gospel which he preaches is not an entirely new thing. It was promised before through the Prophets. So he is linked to that glorious line of God's servants in the past who received the thoughts of God, and spoke them to their people.

The second term in this Address is: "All that are at Rome."

The church at Rome is described as "Gentiles." Paul was called to the Apostolate of the Nations; and the church at Rome fell in that category. That was the completion of the justification of his writing a letter to them, although he did not establish the church—they belong to his Apostolate.

The church does not seem to have been founded by any of the apostles. The most probable supposition about its origin is that Greek Christians from Syria, visiting the Capital of the Empire, preached the gospel there. It may be that some of them settled there and became the nucleus of this Christian development. It is not held that the church was wholly Gentile, but predominantly so. There were, doubtless, some Jewish Christians in the membership, but the majority were Gentiles. The importance of this point will appear when we, later, undertake to interpret some passages in the Epistle.

The Roman Christians are further described as "beloved of God."

Are not all men beloved of God? To be sure! "God is love." "He so loved the world that he gave his Son, only-begotten, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That was before

any had become Christians. But there is a difference between God's love for believers and his love for unbelievers. It is a difference which Paul regarded as justifying his description of those Christians as "beloved of God." Jesus loved all of his disciples, but his love for one so differed from his love for the others that the Gospel according to John repeatedly refers to that one as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." In like manner, the difference between God's love for unbelievers and his love for Christians justifies Paul in calling these Christians "beloved of God." No parent has the same feeling for a child who deliberately or wilfully sets aside his authority that he has for one who earnestly tries to please him in all things.

These Roman Christians are, still further, described as "Saints"—Saints by calling—not called to become Saints, but Saints already by virtue of a divine call.

That, now, is the Christian's position. He is a saint by virtue of a divine call—not a perfect saint to be sure, but a saint, nevertheless. If he is a Christian at all, an inward grace has been imparted which makes him a son of the Most High; and, if that inward grace has been imparted, there will be some outward sign of it. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus exhorted his hearers to prove their sonship to God by pursuing a certain course of life. If we are children of God, there will be a likeness of character that will furnish proof. Certificate of membership in a church may be held, and all questions as to creed may be answered glibly and correctly; but, if there is no likeness of character to God, as he has been manifested in Christ, there is a fraud.

The third, and last, term in this Address is the greeting: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Grace" is the unmerited favor of God. Paul has just said that he "received grace and apostleship." He referred to his conversion and his apostleship, which came at the same time. He here prays, then, that the favor granted in justification and forgiveness may be the portion of the Roman Christians.

It might be asked why he should pray for that blessing to be theirs, when, according to his own teaching, a man is forgiven and justified as soon as he exercises that faith by which he becomes a Christian. The answer is that we never cease to need justifying grace. Forgiven when we accept Christ, we need to be constantly forgiven thereafter, since we cease not to sin. Until we shall be made perfect, we shall need forgiving grace. It is pitiful to hear a man, imperfect as all are, say that he does not sin. He is under a sad delusion.

"Peace" is a part of the good that is prayed for in this gracious Greeting. Peace ought to be the result of the "grace" with which it is here linked. Justified by grace, forgiven, accepted in the Beloved, one ought to have a blessed peace. "Peace," said Jesus, "I leave with you; my peace give I unto you—not as the world giveth, give I unto you." To have that peace of Jesus is our precious privilege, if we are his disciples, justified by grace through faith in him. Says Paul, in the opening of the fifth chapter of this Epistle: "Being, therefore, justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into that grace wherein we stand."

Peace is not a necessary consequence of justification. We must be assured of our justification and realize somewhat of the magnitude of its meaning. May all who read these lines, and have received his grace in forgiveness, be blessed with the "peace of God that passeth all understanding."

Chapter II

A HEART-TOUCH

I: 8-15

The first seven verses of the Epistle embraced the Salutation. The passage now before us is of a conciliatory character. The Apostle wishes to effect a sort of heart-touch between himself and the Christians whom he is addressing. He has already drawn an official bond, and now he wishes to draw one of affection. Hence the burden of this passage is the expression of his affectionate interest in the Christians at Rome—an interest, indeed, which, intensified by special considerations in connection with the Romans, is, at the same time, a part of a more general interest in the Gentiles at large, and so in men universally. That more general interest he expresses as he approaches the conclusion of the introductory part of his Epistle, and gets ready to proceed to the discussion of the great theme which he has in mind.

The first item, then, that here attracts our attention is the expression of the Apostle's interest in the Christians at Rome.

His interest appears in two forms.

The first of these is delight in their religious fame. "I thank my God," he says, "through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world."

We sometimes meet with an idea that it is wrong to desire religious distinction. The idea grows out of a strange misunderstanding of the spirit and teaching of our Lord. His spirit was, beyond question, a spirit of humility. But to possess such a disposition is not inconsistent with a desire for religious distinction. It is not required of genuine discipleship to Christ that we should suppress, and sink ourselves out of sight, in self-depreciation. It is quite in accord with his spirit to desire distinction on account of the elements of character and the good works upon which the distinction is based, and on account of the opportunity for enlarged usefulness which such distinction brings with it. It is true that Jesus said: "Pray in secret," and, "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." But, in the same discourse, he said also: "Men do not put a candle under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it shineth unto all that are in the house; even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." When he said: "Pray in secret," and, "Let not your left hand know what your right hand doeth," he was putting under ban that spirit of ostentation in religion which was so general among the people whom he was addressing; and when he said: "Let your light shine," he meant to teach that the true servant of God should try to put himself in position to send his light the farthest—that he should get on the candlestick! In writing to the Corinthians about a certain collection which he was taking up in the churches, Paul said: "I know your readiness, of which I glory in your behalf to them of Macedonia, that Achaia hath been prepared for a year past; and your

zeal hath stirred up very many of them." To the Thesalonians he wrote: "Ye became an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia, and in Achaia; for from you both sounded forth the word of the Lord; not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place, your faith to God-ward is gone forth."

To make a pretense of having piety which one does not possess, or to make a display of the good things which one does, for the sake of advertising oneself as pious, is very wicked. But it does not follow that it is a virtue to avoid religious distinction, by deliberately burying one's talents or hiding one's good deeds. Such a course, on the contrary, is sinful—less sinful, it may be, than religious pretense and ostentation, but really sinful. Religious distinction is desirable on account of the elements of character upon which it is based, and on account of the advantage it gives one for doing good. On these accounts, it is right to desire religious distinction, and wrong not to desire it.

It is not hard to see how we are to come into possession of the kind of religious distinction which we ought to desire. We cannot possess it by simply desiring it. It is based upon character and performance; and we cannot have it without the character and the performance, no matter how much we may desire it. We cannot win it by getting ourselves put into religious offices of any sort. Since it is based upon character and performance, we only the more conspicuously fail of the distinction on account of nominal position, if we lack the necessary qualifications for real distinction. Dr. John A. Broadus won great distinction as a religious leader. His fame was not due to the bare fact that he was

elected to a Professorship in a great Theological Seminary, and to its Presidency. It was due to his great qualities as a Christian man, as a scholar, and as a preacher of the gospel. There are people in many churches who think the religious distinction they crave may be had if they can only get themselves put into some office in the church, or at the head of some committee. Their idea is not that a position should be filled by a man best qualified, and that such qualification is the man's distinction—a distinction which he already possesses, before he is put into the office; but that the distinction inheres in the office, and is ready to stick to any man who may be able, in any way, to get into the office. One of the common hindrances to the development of churches is the disposition so many people have to get hurt, and to sulk, because they think they are not pushed forward into position. It is wrong and ugly for a Christian to sulk about the work of the church, even if he does not get as much attention as he thinks he deserves. But the first mistake such people make is to suppose that their position in the church depends upon their being pushed. It depends, in the first place, upon their possession of certain qualities, and, in the second place, upon their showing by performance that they do possess those qualities. The man who sits back, and complains that somebody does not get behind him, and push him forward, may expect to continue to sit back.

The other form in which the Apostle's affectionate interest in the Romans appears is a desire to visit them. He says: "God is my witness whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son, how unceasingly I make men-

tion of you, always in my prayers making request, if by any means now at length I may be prospered by the will of God to come unto you."

If he felt so much interest in them as his rejoicing over the fame of their faith would naturally indicate, the question might arise as to why he had not already paid them a visit. He anticipates such a question, and he answers it by assuring them that, in that connection, he constantly mentions them in his prayers, asking the Lord to give him the good fortune to be able to visit them. He has been longing to see them, and has been wishing to make them a visit, but, so far, has been prevented. To witness that such has been the attitude of his heart towards them, he calls upon God to whom his service in the gospel of Christ is rendered as a genuine spiritual worship, and before whom, therefore, his heart is willingly exposed for inspection.

He tells them why he has desired to visit them. He puts his reason in two ways. First, he says: "That I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established." The second form of his reason is this: "That I might have some fruit in you also, even as in the rest of the Gentiles."

Of course, he wished to preach the gospel to the unconverted at Rome, and to be Christ's agent in their salvation. But so far as the people to whom he was writing were concerned, the reason for a visit was the hope that he might be of service in establishing, strengthening them in the Christian life. That was what he meant by "having fruit among them." With exquisite courtesy, he modifies the first form in which he stated his reason, by associating his own gain from

such a visit with theirs. Strengthening them, he would himself be encouraged by their faith.

This association of gain to himself with their gain from his visit is no "pious fraud and holy flattery," as a scholar, centuries ago, was pleased to call it. It often happens that, while the pastor is feeding and strengthening his people, their faith and good works are encouraging and strengthening him. One of the most edifying things of all this writer's experience is the observation of his people doing, here and yonder, what he knows they would not do were they not moved by the love of Christ. Paul meant exactly what he said—he expected that, while he strengthened the Roman Christians, they would strengthen him.

The Apostle desired to visit Rome, then, with a certain end in view—What did he do to get there?

He planned for the visit. "Oftentimes," he says, "I purposed to come unto you, and was hindered hitherto." He did what he could to make his going practicable. With a man like Paul, the repeated purposing of which he speaks meant that he kept the matter before him, and earnestly endeavored to compass his object.

He also prayed to be allowed to make the visit. This was an habitual petition of his. He uses the word "always" to express how habitually he prayed that he might be prospered of God to go to them.

Do you, reader, desire the progress of Christ's work in your community, and in the wide world? Think a moment! You say that you are a Christian—do you not? That means that you are a disciple of Christ. To be a disciple of Christ means that, to some extent, at least, you are engaged to obey his commands, and

that, to some extent, at least, you possess his spirit. If you have his spirit, you desire the progress of his work in the world. Do you desire the progress of that work for which he gave himself without reserve, even unto the death of the cross? If so, what are you doing towards bringing about that which you desire? You, surely, should not place yourself in any position whereby the work would be hindered. Paul was hindered in realizing his desire in this case, but not by any fault of his. You should, just as surely, do all you can to help forward the cause of Christ in the world. Use all the opportunities you have to serve the Master, and seek further opportunities. Paul used the opportunities he had, and was always planning to come into possession of still others. You should pray for the coming of the Kingdom—daily and earnestly pray for the coming of the Kingdom of our Lord. As we go about our business, our work, our daily round of duties, we ought to remember that, in proportion as we consecrate ourselves to our Redeemer-Lord, we are putting our lives into the great current of forces, the final masterpiece of whose energy, under divine direction, is to be a finished Kingdom for Christ; and, as we remember that, we ought, devoutly and passionately, to pray: "Thy Kingdom Come!"

A second item that attracts our attention, as we inspect the section of the Epistle now under consideration, is that the Apostle brings his interest in the Christians at Rome into relation with a more general interest. "I am debtor," he says, "both to Greeks and Barbarians, both to the wise and the foolish."

He was, doubtless, speaking as the Apostle to the

Gentiles, and meant to designate Gentiles at large and comprehensively, when he said, "Greeks and Barbarians, wise and foolish." But with him, however, interest in his own people, the Jews, is always to be assumed, presupposed, taken for granted.

Paul considered himself as debtor to the Gentiles. Whence did he conceive this debt to have arisen?

First, out of the grace of which he was made a recipient on the way to Damascus. We have heard him, in the fifth verse of this first chapter of the Epistle, declaring that he had from Christ "grace and apostleship unto obedience of faith among all nations." The "grace" there referred to was forgiving grace; and he sets down, as an object of the giving of that grace, what he calls "obedience of faith." The meaning is, that one of the objects of the grace given him in conversion was that he might go and act as an agent in producing submission among the Gentiles to this same faith which had come into his heart. The same doctrine he teaches in 2 Corinthians 4:6, where he says of God that, "He shined in our hearts in order that we might give forth the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Again, Paul thought of this debt as arising out of his call to the Apostolate. This, also, is brought out in the fifth verse of this first chapter of the Epistle. He received, not only the grace of forgiveness in conversion, but also apostleship, with a view to his "becoming an agent" for bringing the Gentiles under the power of faith in Christ. To the obligation which this call laid upon him, he referred, over and over again, notably in 1 Corinthians 9:19, where he says: "Neces-

sity is laid upon me ; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel."

These two things, grace given in his conversion, and his call to the apostleship, Paul regarded as making of him a debtor to the Gentiles. Mark you: A "debtor." He was a debtor, not on account of anything the Gentiles had done for him, but on account of what Christ had done for him, and required of him in return. Christ had saved Paul, and, in effect, had said to him: "You cannot do anything for me personally as a return for what I have done for you; I do not ask anything; instead of that, I direct you to go, at any sacrifice to yourself, and speak of me to the Gentile world." It is as if a mother should say to her daughter: "You cannot repay me for my sacrifice and care on your behalf; I do not ask that; I only want you to pass it on to your children."

A debt like that which rested upon Paul rests upon all of us who name the name of Christ. We claim to have been made partakers of the same forgiving grace that was bestowed upon him; and that lays upon us a debt to the world like the one it laid upon Paul. Besides the forgiving grace bestowed upon us, is the call to the Gentile Apostolate. That call has not come to us in the same way that it came to Paul; but, nevertheless, it has come. Saul of Tarsus might have turned a deaf ear to that voice which said: "I send thee forth far hence to the Gentiles." So we may turn a deaf ear to the call that is coming to us in the providences of God. If he had turned a deaf ear, the call would have rung out, nevertheless; and, although we may turn a deaf ear, the call goes on ringing. We have been called, by

his providence, as God's people have never before been called, to press our Apostolate to the Gentiles, as not even Israel was called to that Apostolate, before Saul of Tarsus was selected to take the place which Israel refused. Whither did that debt to the Gentiles move Paul? He answers the question. "So much as in me lies," he tells the Romans, "I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are at Rome." There is in this declaration a hint that Rome was not to be considered an easy place for the preaching of the gospel. It mattered not with Paul whether his Apostolate called him to easy or hard work; he was ready to do the work.

So it always was with this grand Apostle to the Gentiles. He faltered not at any undertaking which the Master set before him. He sank not under any burden which his work imposed. He could not be driven back by any suffering that came upon him as he pressed on with his work.

So let it be with God's people to-day! Jehovah is so moving among the nations as to leave his people no room to doubt that he is calling them to press the great Apostolate whose work Paul laid down only when his noble head rolled under Cæsar's axe. Let his people hear the call; and let them move as faithfully, as resolutely, as unfalteringly, as patiently, as grandly to the work as did Paul, who now stands among the glorious "cloud of witnesses," and watches us at the great work for which he gave his life!

Chapter III

STATEMENT OF THE THEME

I: 16, 17

The first fifteen verses of the Epistle, as we have seen, are Introductory, the first seven of the fifteen being Salutatory, and the other eight Conciliatory. The section now before us makes the transition from the Introduction to the discussion of the great theme in the body of the Epistle; and, while making this transition, it states the theme to be discussed.

Paul was not ashamed to preach the gospel even in Rome. He would not be ashamed of the gospel there, because he knew that it was God's power for salvation to all who would believe; and it was that, because it was a revelation of a divine righteousness for men. A righteousness of God through faith, for unrighteous men, is the theme which he will expound in the body of the Epistle.

The scheme of thought in the section may be exhibited thus: The gospel—what it is; what it can do; in what spirit it should be preached.

What is the gospel, as here set forth? He calls it "good news." That is the meaning of the word by which he designates it, as it is the meaning of our word "gospel." What, then, as he conceived it, is the pith and core of that "good news"? He answers the ques-

tion. He says that it is "a righteousness of God by faith unto faith."

"Righteousness of God," in this connection, was not intended by the Apostle to designate a quality of the divine character, but something which God provides, and offers to unrighteous men. It is "a righteousness for unrighteous men of which God is the author—a divinely originated righteousness which is to unrighteous men who will avail themselves of it, in the place of a righteousness of their own, so far as a title to eternal life is concerned."

This "righteousness" is revealed in the gospel, he says, as being "from faith to faith," or "by faith unto faith," or "out of faith into faith." The last of these three expressions is an exact and literal rendering of his language. It is a righteousness that arises out of faith and proceeds into faith; that is to say, is offered to faith. The meaning, then, is that in the gospel is revealed a faith-righteousness (as distinguished from a works-righteousness), which faith-righteousness must be appropriated by faith. The same thought he will express in 3:21, 22, where he will say: "But now, apart from the law, a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, unto all them that believe."

A righteousness provided by God, and therefore acceptable to God, and a righteousness, too, that is available to faith, is what Paul says is revealed in the gospel; and it is this righteousness that makes the revelation an evangel, a gospel, good news, glad tidings.

Man's first and greatest need is such a righteousness.

He needs it because he is without it, and because without it he is under eternal condemnation. It is his greatest need, because this life, with its needs and supplies, has a worthy significance and value only as it is put into relation with the life to come, for which it is a preparation, and because the first step in the preparation for bliss in the life beyond must be taken by securing for oneself a righteousness acceptable to God. Without a title to a pure and noble and blissful life in the world to come, any man's life here is a failure, no matter what apparent success may be. He may become enamored of the struggle that is here going on, and of the triumphs which he is enabled to score; but, nevertheless, his life, without a title to heaven, is a failure, and, sometimes here or hereafter, he will so see it. The Christian's great desire is that all should see it before the fatal hour.

Man cannot provide for himself the righteousness that will supply this first and greatest need of all. The moral nature which we carry about with us, and which fixes a great gulf between us and all other orders of creation with which we come in contact, puts us into relation with a perfect moral standard. There is absolutely no escape from that relationship. We are under obligation to be perfect in our moral life. It was not to create such an obligation that the Law from Sinai was given, but to exhibit, or define, that obligation. Men must be made to see the scope of the obligation resting upon them, and to see how far they fall short of discharging it. If the obligation requires a morally perfect life—perfect externally and internally—it is evident that the obligation is one which no man can dis-

charge, fallen as all are. No man can, from this time on, meet its requirements; and, if one could do such a thing, past breaches of the obligation would remain without atonement. It is utterly impossible that any man should, by any effort of his own, provide for himself such a righteousness as all most sorely need.

Such a righteousness, however, is revealed in the gospel. It is a faith-righteousness. It is the righteousness of Christ, the Redeemer, which is offered to our faith, and which, upon being accepted by us, is set to our account, and procures for us from God that we shall be treated as though that righteousness were ours, so far as a title to heaven is concerned. This offer of righteousness is made as general as its need; that is to say, universal—not to Jews alone, but to Gentiles as well—to Jews first, as the people to whom the “promises” had been made, but also to the Gentiles.

That, now, according to Paul, is the marrow of the gospel—it is the revelation of a righteousness which is appropriated by faith, and which, on that account, is available to all, and which, being provided by God, is acceptable to him, and becomes, for all who will avail themselves of it, sufficient reason, before God, why he should treat them as if they were righteous, and give them exemption from condemnation, and a title to everlasting life.

There is no wonder that this should be called “good news.” How “good” it must have seemed to Paul! He was so full of moral earnestness. He had seen so clearly the perfect standard proclaimed from Sinai. He had tried so hard to realize that standard in his life. He had felt so keenly the impossibility of the task with

which he had been struggling. When he met Jesus on the Damascus road, and was convinced that what was impossible in the task had been done for him, the whole aspect of the case was changed. His moral life received a new point of support; and, from that time till the end came, no matter what his circumstances, he exulted in this new-found righteousness.

What the gospel is—after that, what the gospel can do—comes to view in the section of the Epistle we are now considering. The Apostle says that it is “God’s power unto salvation to every one that believeth.” This gospel, then, can save them, because it is God’s power exerted for that purpose.

There is a divine energy *in* the gospel. Jesus said: “I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me”; and he compared the “word of his kingdom” to seed. He meant that there would be an attractive force in his cross, and that there would be in the truths of the gospel a latent power that, under proper conditions, would be developed.

In what does the divine energy *in* the gospel consist? Certainly, at least, in adaptation to man’s deepest need and highest aspiration.

Man’s deepest need is a moral one. His bankruptcy is a moral one. His moral bankruptcy makes itself felt in different ways. Most commonly, perhaps, the feeling comes in the form of a more or less well-defined dread with reference to a future meeting with some avenging power that will punish him for his sins. This statement is intended to cover the case from the lowest savage all the way up to the most enlightened disbeliever—from the ignorant and degraded son of

the forest who, under the influence of this feeling, tortures himself or sacrifices his children, all the way up to the cultured philosopher who, when dying, says: "I am making a fearful leap in the dark."

Man's highest aspiration is a moral one. Where sin has not been so indulged that the conscience is "seared," that the sinner is "past feeling," there is an aspiration after holiness. This aspiration may be very feeble, and it may be very inconstant; but, however weak or intermittent, it has a place in the soul. There is a felt lack that the heart would have supplied. Saul of Tarsus presents to us a case where the aspiration was constant and intense. It would not be difficult to find many cases where it is certainly very weak and very intermittent.

The gospel, coming with the offer of a righteousness available to all by faith, is adapted to both this deepest need and this highest aspiration of the human soul. To the man whose moral life asserts its presence scarcely in any way except in a dread for the future, there is offered a righteousness which will deliver him from the condemnation that is casting its shadow before, and putting that dread in his soul. To the man whose moral nature asserts itself chiefly in an aspiration after holiness, the gospel offers a righteousness that not only delivers from condemnation, but also carries with it a promise of deliverance from sin.

This perfect adaptation of the gospel of a faith-righteousness to man's deepest need and highest aspiration represents the divine energy *in* that gospel.

There is, also, a divine energy *back* of the gospel. Before his death Jesus told his disciples that, after his

departure, he would send them the Holy Spirit, who would convince the world of sin, and of righteousness and judgment. When he was about to ascend to glory, after his resurrection, he told them that they must be his witnesses among all nations, but that they must tarry at Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high.

Such is the divine energy *back* of the gospel of a righteousness of God offered to faith. It is the power of the Holy Spirit.

When the power back of the gospel is joined to the power in the gospel, the result is certain—salvation is inevitable. It is like putting a sharp sword in the hand moved by a brawny arm—the work to which the sword is suited will be done. This combination was effected in connection with the preaching by early disciples. Jesus had told them to tarry at Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high. That power came down on the day of Pentecost. The result of the preaching on that day was the addition of about three thousand to the number of the disciples. In less than five years churches were gathered in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. In about seven years the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles began; and in thirty years, after the Ascension of Christ, there were disciples in Asia Minor, Syria, Africa, Greece, and Rome. About seventy years after that memorable Pentecost the Pagan Pliny, Roman governor of Pontus and Bythinia, wrote that Christianity had long subsisted in those provinces, though remote from Judea; and what he called the “contagion of this superstition”

had seized not only cities but the towns also and the open country, so that the heathen temples were "almost forsaken." Thirty years later Justin Martyr wrote: "There is not a nation, either Greek or Barbarian, or of any other name, even those who wander in tribes and live in tents, among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered to the Father and Creator of the universe by the name of the Crucified Jesus." In spite of the fiercest opposition, this gospel held on its way of conquest; and the moral revolution which it effected was as marked as its progress was rapid.

When Christianity received imperial recognition at the hands of Constantine, in the fourth century, selfishness and corruption grew apace in the established church, and stifled the missionary spirit for dreary centuries. The church ceased to be the conquering power it had been. This was not because the gospel had any less power *in* it, nor because there was any less power *back* of it; but it was because the missionary spirit had been smothered, and because the church had ceased to be endued with power from on high. It is only in recent times that the church has been waking up from its long inaction, and has begun to realize its mission to give the gospel to the nations. It now needs to realize, also, that it must be endued with power from on high. The history of the modern missionary enterprise is not without examples fitted to call attention to this factor in the work. The Koreans, the Telugus, Madagascar, the Sandwich Islands, are witnesses of what may be done when a combination is effected between the power that is in the gospel and the power that

is back of it. In each of these cases it may be said, scarcely in a figure, that a nation was born unto God in a day.

In what spirit should this gospel be preached? Paul said he was not ashamed of it. He knew its power; and, for that reason, he was not ashamed to preach it anywhere.

All Christians everywhere are committed to the preaching of this gospel. By virtue of their discipleship to Christ, they are constituted witnesses. To witness for him means, of course, to live as they should live who believe themselves to have been justified through acceptance of his righteousness, and to have been made heirs of glory; and it means to offer to others, in his name, this same justifying righteousness. To this witnessing for him every Christian is called.

Leaving out of account, however, for the present, the universal call of Christians to witness for him by holy living, what shall we say about the spirit in which Christians should do the other part of their work; namely, witnessing by offering his justifying righteousness to others? In other words, in what spirit should this gospel be preached?

"Boldly," is one answer to that question. Paul said he was not ashamed to preach it even at Rome. Why not ashamed? Because he had unwavering confidence in it. The Christian, whoever he may be, can preach the gospel boldly if he has unwavering confidence in it. That does not mean audaciously. It is a boldness whose chief characteristic is not brazenness, or insolence, or anything of that sort, but firmness of grip, an unwavering, unqualified declaration of salvation on the

ground of the righteousness of Christ appropriated by faith. That should be preached without any qualification or apology. There are some things that ought to be regarded as settled, as having won their right to be set down, once for all, as true. Of such character is this basal article of the gospel of Christ. It has vindicated its right to be placed among *established* truths. Here, and here only, is salvation. Of that there need be no longer any doubt. So preach it!

"Lovingly" is another answer to the question as to the spirit in which this gospel should be preached. If Christians have that confidence in it which will make them preach it boldly, the same confidence ought to make them preach it lovingly. Away with anger in preaching the gospel, whether the preacher be lay or clerical! Away with abuse and denunciation of those who will not receive the gospel message! Such a spirit savors of partisanship or a sense of defeat. If we have an unwavering confidence in the gospel, believing that it presents an absolutely certain remedy, so that we have no interest in beholding it triumph, except the interest we feel in the salvation of our fellow men, then where is any room for anger or denunciation? A mother sees her child, at a distance, picking up shells on the seashore. The tide is coming in. The child, intent upon its pastime, with the accustomed roar of the sea sounding in his ears, is unconscious of the near approach of the waves. The mother calls and warns him; but he does not hear. She is unable to walk, and so cannot go to him. She knows that he will soon be cut off by the tide, and there will be no escape for him. Does she get angry and denounce him, because,

absorbed in his play, he does not hear? By no means. She weeps, but she does not denounce. She is interested only to save her child. So we may weep because men do not hear us as we call them away from certain destruction, but we must not abuse them.

"Patiently" is still another answer to the question as to the spirit in which we should preach the gospel. This, also, we can do, if we have unwavering confidence in our message. It is Christ's work, and it is his gospel; and we can afford to be just as patient as he wants us to be. There is no room for despondency of spirit or fitfulness of activity. On and on and on we must preach. Preaching boldly, lovingly, and patiently, we must seek the anointing from above.

PART II
THE GREAT ARGUMENT

1: 18—3: 20

Chapter IV

THE GENTILE WORLD CONDEMNED

I: 18-32

The gospel is God's power unto salvation. Why? Because in it is revealed God's righteousness for unrighteous men. That is what the Apostle has taught us in verses 16 and 17 of this first chapter of his great Epistle. Implied in that teaching is a necessity for salvation. That necessity he proceeds at verse 18 to prove. The rest of the chapter he takes up with the proof, so far as the Gentiles are concerned. With the beginning of the second chapter he will take up the case of the Jews.

As he very commonly does, the Apostle puts the gist of the whole section before us in the first verse of it. There is need of salvation; "for," says he, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness." The remaining fourteen verses of this section are devoted to a development of the ideas set out in the words just quoted, and standing at the head of the section.

There are here two leading ideas, to which all others in the section attach themselves. These two leading ideas are: The truth of God repressed; the wrath of God revealed.

The truth of God repressed—that is the first of the two ideas. It is charged upon the Gentiles that they “hold down” or “repress” the truth. King James Version says: “Hold the truth in unrighteousness;” and the American Standard Revision has: “Hinder the truth in unrighteousness.” The idea of the Apostle is that of repressing the truth.

What truth has he in mind? He makes his meaning clear in the development of his idea. He calls it “What is known of God;” that is to say, what may be known, and what is actually known, of God by those who have only the revelation of Nature. Again, he calls it: “The invisible things of God;” and, still again, he calls it God’s everlasting power and divinity; that is to say, his power and other attributes of divinity, such as wisdom and eternal self-existence.

I cannot refrain from digressing for just a moment to call attention to the care with which the Apostle uses language. He is talking about what may be learned of God from Nature—those qualities or attributes of God’s character that are reflected in creation; and he mentions *power* first, as the most conspicuous of these, and then puts all the others under the comprehensive term *divinity*. It is as if he had said: “Power and other such God-like attributes.” In Colossians 2:9 he is speaking of Christ and wishes to describe his greatness in its very essence, and he says that “in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of deity in bodily shape.” He does not there say that Christ is characterized by God-like qualities, or attributes, but that *deity* dwells in him—not that he is divine only, as we might say of a pre-eminent poet or musician that he is a divine artist, but

that he possesses deity proper. The King James Version renders Paul's language exactly alike in both these places. His language, however, is not the same. He uses the word for *divinity* here in Romans, where he is speaking of the divine attributes reflected in Nature; while in Colossians 2:9, of the essential greatness of Christ, he uses the word for *deity* proper.

The truth, then, which Paul charges the Gentiles with repressing, is the truth of everlasting power and other like attributes of the Creator.

To be repressed this truth must have been known; and, indeed, the Apostle declares that it was known by the Gentiles. How known? The answer, in the Apostle's words, was this: "The things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made."

These invisible qualities of God's character—qualities that cannot be seen by physical eyes—are seen mentally, being inferred from the things that are made, from the visible world about us.

This world that the Gentiles saw needed great power to bring it into existence. Such is the necessary connection in the human mind between cause and effect, that when any effect is perceived a cause sufficient to produce it is, at once, and involuntarily, supposed, and may properly be said to be known to exist. When the Gentiles, therefore, saw the existing world, they knew that somewhere there was a cause sufficient to produce what they saw. To be sure, it may be said that they did not know that this power sufficient to produce what they saw, was the Infinite Power that we have been taught to regard it. But practically it was the same

thing; and they did know that such power was not fitly represented by a calf, a serpent, or a toad. Besides, the Apostle says that "God manifested" the truth to them; and, while he meant that this "manifestation" was primarily through the medium of the visible world, we shall not be straining his meaning if we suppose that, along with this external manifestation of power, there was an internal divine intimation that the power manifested was the Greatest Power, the Power to be worshiped.

Again, this world that was visible to the Gentiles showed evidences of wisdom. There is in it contrivance, design. The human mind is so constituted that, when it sees evidence of contrivance, it naturally supposes a contriver. Men may school themselves, perhaps, to get around that supposition; but that is a way of repressing the truth; for, *naturally*, we look for a contriver as soon as we see evidence of a contrivance. Here, too, it may be said that the Gentiles did not know that it was the Infinite Wisdom that was concerned in designing creation (the wisdom that should be worshiped), but practically it was the same thing; and here, again, we may suppose the Apostle to have meant that there was an internal, divine intimation accompanying the external and visible manifestation.

We might go on and say that the Gentiles, knowing an intelligent Being with wisdom to design, and power to create the world, must also have known that that Being existed before the world he created. While this was not arriving strictly at knowledge of an eternal and self-existent Being, it was practically the same thing;

and, still again, we may suppose that the internal divine intimation completed the demonstration.

How did the Gentiles repress the truth thus known? Paul says they did it "in unrighteousness." Unrighteousness was the instrument by which they held down the truth—the element in which they submerged it. "Ungodliness" is impiety; "unrighteousness" is immorality. Immorality then was the element in which the truth was submerged by the Gentile world. It was by their immorality that they repressed what they knew of God. What they knew of God from Nature, taken in connection with what was written in their consciences, was calling to a life of a certain sort, while their lusts were moving them in another direction. They yielded to their lusts. Thus they pursued a course of repressing the truth. The result was idolatry. If the God revealed to their consciences in creation would not sanction their lusts, they would make gods that would sanction such things. Accordingly, the Apostle says: "Knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts, and creeping things." They had the truth; in unrighteousness, they repressed it; consequently, they became idolaters.

"The wrath of God revealed"—that is the other leading idea developed by the Apostle in the section of the Epistle here under consideration.

"The wrath of God"—what is that? In our conception of it there are two things we must avoid.

On one hand, we must not suppose that the divine wrath has in it anything which pollutes human wrath and makes it sinful. There is none of that personal resentment which gives to the manifestation of wrath in men the character of revenge.

On the other hand, we must not suppose that the love of God excludes any real wrath on his part. So far from that, we must regard his wrath as having a very close connection with his love. Said one of the ancients: "If God is not angry with the ungodly and unrighteous, neither can he have any pleasure in the pious and the righteous; for, in regard to things of an opposite nature, he must be affected by both or by neither." A modern anonymous writer, approaching the matter in a different way, has said: "God in us is both love, the flame of the Spirit renewing us, if we submit to its mastery, and keeping us in living ways; and a consuming fire, if we resist it—in both cases, it is the same love, but its relentless burning of dead branches we call vengeance." "The wrath of God," says still another, "is the love of the Holy God for all that is good, in its energy as antagonistic to all that is evil."

This wrath of God, the Apostle says, is "revealed,"—"revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who repress the truth in unrighteousness." The question now is: How is the divine wrath revealed? Paul answers that question, as he goes on with the development of his subject.

Three times he says that God "gave them up;" and he tells to what they were given up. Having repressed

the truth of God in unrighteousness, they were given up to still greater unrighteousness. In lust, they turned away from God; and he gave them up to still greater lust, to work all manner of moral uncleanness. That is what he here teaches about the revelation, or manifestation, of the divine wrath in the case of the Gentiles. God gave them over to unbridled lust, as a retribution for their ungodliness and unrighteousness.

But some man will say: I do not see how such a doctrine is compatible with the Apostle's own teaching about the love and holiness of God. Let us look again. It is not probable that Paul would contradict himself.

Look at the matter through a father's heart and conduct. Jesus gave the world such an illustration. It is a story of which men will never grow tired. There was a son who wished to get away from his father's house, that he might have what he probably called a "good time." The father, knowing what the boy desired, would do what he could to dissuade him. Seeing that the boy was bent on having his own way, the father would know that the best course was to let him go, and "hit bottom." And so the father helped the boy to get off—gave him his portion of goods.

With this parable in mind, ascend to a summit from which a world-wide, race-wide view may be had. The divine Father sees that humanity, his wayward child, will not be persuaded to submit to the divine government, and that the shortest course to a cure of his insubordination, indeed, the only way to save him, is through the very excess of misery into which a free rein to his insubordinate spirit will bring him. In that case, is there anything incompatible with love and holi-

ness, if the divine Father hands over the wayward child to the wayward spirit which will take him to deeper and deeper sin, until he is ready to cry for salvation from the misery of his degradation? That is what the Apostle represents God as doing. His wrath, that unchangeable antagonism to sin, which is the counterpart of his unchangeable favor for righteousness—his wrath is revealed in his giving the Gentiles up to lust, handing them over to the evil spirit in them, as the only way by which they would reach the point where they would cry out for deliverance, and be prepared to accept that righteousness which is revealed in the gospel of Christ.

The awful picture which the Apostle, in this section of the Epistle, draws of the immorality of heathendom suggests the question which so often arises as to whether the heathen will be saved without the gospel. The picture drawn by Paul has been found to correspond to the real condition of heathendom as it has been known since the modern missionary enterprise opened it up to us. Paul drew it as it existed at that time in the mighty Roman Empire. So modern missionaries have found it in India, China, Africa, and the Islands of the Sea. It is recorded of one missionary that, when he read this passage of Paul's Epistle, the heathen to whom he read it accused him of writing it himself from his knowledge of their condition!

Can people whose condition Paul's description here truly represents be saved without the gospel?

Time seems to have shown that they cannot be saved in this world without the gospel. Civilization, as we know it, may do them some good. But civilization, as

we know it, is, in its best elements, a product of the gospel; and, if they are helped at all, so far as this world is concerned, the help will be from the gospel at last.

The real question, however, is: Will they be saved from future perdition without the gospel? To that question there can be but one answer for those who understand Paul, and accept his teaching. The answer is: No, they will not be saved without the gospel. The wrath of God here set forth, as revealed against their ungodliness and unrighteousness, is but the beginning of wrath. Those who are not cured of their ungodliness and unrighteousness will only treasure up for themselves "wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his works—to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and incorruption, eternal life; but unto them that are factious and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation, and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile."

But some man will say: It is not just in God to punish the heathen for rejecting Christ when they had never heard of him. It hardly seems to be becoming in us to say what is not just for God. It is better to believe unfalteringly that the Judge of all the earth will do right. Besides, the Scriptures do not anywhere say, as Paul does not here say, that the heathen will perish for rejecting a Christ of whom they never heard. Paul here says that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against them, not for rejection of a Christ of

whom they have never heard, but for repression of the truth.

Another will say: If a heathen man does the best he knows, it does not look as if he ought to be lost. Nor does Paul, or any other scripture writer, say that such a man will be lost. If he does not repress the truth, but lives up to the light he has, we may believe that the Atonement of Christ covers his case, as it covers the case of infants and idiots, and even the case of those saints who lived and died before the transaction of Calvary. The sad fact, however, is that the heathen do not live up to their light.

Yet another will say: It does not look right that the heathen should suffer the same retribution as those who persistently reject Jesus. We are not bound by any scripture teaching to believe that they will. The greater the light sinned against, the greater the condemnation, is a principle which inspiration leaves us no room to doubt.

Will the heathen be saved without the gospel? Some ask the question half believing that they will, and allowing that half belief to paralyze their own missionary spirit. Christ said: Give them the gospel. The question for us is, not whether they will be saved without it, but whether we shall be saved if we do not endeavor to give it to them!

Chapter V.

THE JEWISH PEOPLE CONDEMNED

2: 1-29

Paul is showing the universal need of salvation. In 1:18-32, he has shown that need for the Gentile world. The Gentiles have repressed the truth of God revealed to them in Nature; and, for their repression of the truth, the wrath of God has come upon them. The divine wrath has taken the form of giving them over to the evil spirit in them, to work the utmost moral abomination. Now, "in the midst of this flood of pollutions and iniquities which Gentile society present to view, the Apostle sees one who, like the judge from the height of his tribunal, sends a stern look over the corrupt mass, condemning the evil that reigns in it, and applauding the wrath of God which punishes it." This person is the typical Jew. The Apostle at once addresses him. He does not at first call him a Jew. He defers that designation till he comes to the seventeenth verse. He is about to deal with violent prejudices; and so he chooses to approach the matter in a general way, and lay down a general principle first and apply it afterwards. His object is to show the need of salvation on the part of the Jews, as he has just shown that need on the part of the Gentiles. He begins by virtually saying: Wherefore, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest, thou art thyself without excuse; thou

lookest upon the wickedness of the corrupt Gentile world around thee, and approvest the divine judgment upon it; and in doing that thou condemnest thyself, since thou art guilty of like wickedness; in approving the divine judgment upon the Gentiles, thou art really admitting thyself to be worthy of the same judgment. And why is such an admission implied? Simply because it is agreed by both parties to the colloquy, by the Jew addressed and the Apostle addressing him, that God's judgment is "according to truth." But a judgment that is "according to truth" is an impartial judgment.

That God's judgment is impartial is the general principle which Paul lays down for application in his discussion of the subject of this section and chapter. It is in verse two that he lays down the principle. He carries the judgment of God into the future. He is not now speaking of a present punishment as he was in the section just preceding this. He is, on the contrary, speaking about the divine sentence upon all men, "in the day," as he says, verse sixteen, "when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel by Jesus Christ." God's sentence, in the judgment day, will be impartial. It will recognize a certain standard of judgment; and the sentence will be rendered according to that standard.

What a man has *known* will not determine the sentence. "Not the hearers of the Law," he would say, "are just before God. You Israelites have the Law of Moses; you heard that Law read; you know it; you suppose that the mere hearing and knowing of it gives you a privileged position, makes you far better than the

Gentiles, whose wickedness you condemn." In that view, you are entirely mistaken. If hearing and knowing the Law would confer any such privilege of exemption from punishment, as you suppose, then these very Gentiles would enjoy exemption; for they have heard and do know a moral law. That moral law, it is true, was not given to them on tablets of stone; but it is written in their hearts, and their hearts are a tribunal before which they are constantly on trial, their consciences bearing witness to the law, and their thoughts accusing or excusing them.

Are any of us modern men liable to make the mistake made by the people whose representative the Apostle here addresses? Some of us read the Bible a good deal; some of us hear preaching with considerable regularity; some who do not read the Bible or hear preaching may suppose themselves to be well up in their ideas of right living. Can it be possible that any of us are trusting, in any measure, any of these things to affect the sentence which the Great Judge will pass upon us in the last Day? Among all strange things, the human heart is one of the strangest; and some of us may be doing so strangely as to rest in what we *know* about right, for our justification before God. Let every one inspect his thoughts and see how he stands. Do you read the Bible? Yes? Do you believe that the Bible was given by the Lord to guide men in the right way? Yes? Is it really your guide? If not, do you suppose you are better than those who never open it? There is danger right here. And, as a matter of fact, you may be worse; and your sentence, in the Great Day, may be severer. What is true of

reading the Bible without practicing it is true also of hearing the gospel preached. So far from making the sentence lighter, it may make the penalty severer. All depends upon yielding to the claims of the gospel. In like manner, if one is depending upon moral ideas, he will come to grief. The sentence of the great, impartial Judge will not be determined by how much a man has heard or read or thought. It will not be determined by what he *knows*, no matter how his knowledge may have been gained.

Nor will the sentence be determined by any natural or external signs, ceremonies, or connections. "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly," says Paul; "neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God."

The view of the Apostle was very different from that of the people with reference to whom he was making that declaration. As they thought their knowledge of the Law gave them a far better standing before God than the Gentiles enjoyed, so did they think that their Jewish descent, and the elaborate ceremonial observed by them, also gave them a better standing. That view of the case was utterly repudiated by Paul, who was himself a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and who had been a Pharisee of the strictest sect. Natural descent and external rites would not be considered when the soul should, at last, stand before the Judge, to receive sentence.

The people for whom Paul was making this deliverance have always, since that time, had representatives

in Christendom—persons who thought that somehow or other, external rites and connections have some saving virtue. There are people of that sort now in this twentieth century of the Christian era. They are to be found in all places. They are of all grades of general intelligence. Some think there is saving virtue in baptism; and some think membership in a church will save.

In everything of that sort there is delusion. It matters not how many times one has been baptized, nor by whom, nor how often one has joined a church, nor how good the church; if that is all he has upon which to rest a hope for the sentence he desires, his hope is utterly vain. No sentence of the Great Judge, in the final Day, will rest upon anything external—not upon submission to any ordinance, observance of any rite or ceremony, or connection with any church or other organization.

Nor will it be determined or favorably affected by any consideration of past favors. "Reckonest thou this, O man, who judgest them that practice such things, and doest the same that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" "There is no respect of persons with God; for as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law, and as many as have sinned under the law shall be judged by the law."

That is what Paul says to the typical Jew whom he is addressing. The Jews of his day had behind them a long history of God's gracious dealings with that people. Wonderfully he had cared for them, from the time of Abram's call. Their history had been a very checkered one; but, all the way, they were not allowed

to forget that they were a people chosen of God for a great purpose. When Paul wrote they had come to regard their peculiar position as conferring upon them an inalienable right to God's favor. That they could ever be finally cast off was no part of their creed. The opposite of that was distinctly and firmly held by them. They supposed that, while condemning the Gentiles, they might practice iniquities they condemned, and escape the judgment of God. Such delusion Paul relentlessly brushes aside. The favors bestowed upon them in the past, the high place which the execution of God's purpose for salvation to the world had given them, would not release them from the necessity of standing before the Dread Tribunal at last, to be judged as all other men of all other nations would be judged.

This truth is not special in its application. It was true of the Jews of Paul's time that they would not escape an impartial judgment on account of favors which Jehovah all along through their history had shown them; and it is true of all men, however favored they may be, that they must be judged by the same principle of judgment that is applied in the case of all others. It matters not what sort of position we may have occupied; it matters not what men have thought of us, or what we have thought of ourselves, we shall be obliged to stand before an impartial Judge, at last, who is no respecter of persons, and receive an impartial sentence. The sentence passed upon us will not be favorably affected by a consideration of any privileges or favors or positions or good opinions that have fallen to our lot here below.

Nor will an impartial sentence be escaped through the leniency of what men call "the mercy of God." Paul puts to the Jew who rises up before him this question: "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

The goodness of God ought to have induced Israel to repent of their sins, but, so far from that, the more God showed himself good, patient, and longsuffering, the more did the nation grow in pride and opposition to his holy purpose of salvation in Christ. But, in so doing, the Apostle declares, they were treasuring up wrath for themselves—wrath that would come upon them "in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

Nothing could be plainer than that Paul sets aside the idea that the impenitent will find escape from perdition through the "mercy" of the Judge. There are people, even now, and among us, who are more or less vaguely, it may be, and yet really, trusting the mercifulness of God to save them, at last, from a just and impartial sentence. Recipients of God's goodness, subjects of his longsuffering forbearance, they abuse his goodness and patience by going on in sin, and construing his longsuffering as a license; and they look forward to being delivered from a deserved fate by the goodness which they abuse. They "treasure up wrath against the day of wrath."

The sentence for eternity will be based upon what a

man has *done*. Does that seem like making salvation a matter of merit instead of a matter of grace, a matter of works instead of faith? Let Paul himself speak about it. He says that God "will render to every man according to his works." What he calls "his gospel" was justification by grace through faith in Christ. How is it then that here in this Epistle, so much of which is taken up with the exposition of this very doctrine of justification by grace through faith, he says that in the final judgment the Judge "will render to every man according to his works"? There is surely no conflict. The seeming conflict is harmonized in the words which immediately follow his statement that God will render to every man according to his works. To those who by patience and well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, God will give eternal life, he says; but unto those who are factious, and obey not the truth but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation, and anguish. Here controlling purposes of life come to view. On one side is the man who seeks glory and honor and incorruption; on the other is the man who is factious and does not obey the truth but obeys unrighteousness. On one side is the man whose ruling thought is spiritual; on the other is the man whose ruling thought is carnal. They are as wide apart as the poles. One walks in the light as God gives it to him; the other turns his eyes from the light, and walks in his own way. Thus it is that each shall be judged according to his works. Works become the exponent of character, of the ruling thought, of the dominant purpose.

We must not expect eternal life unless by patience in

well-doing, we seek glory and honor and incorruption. Upon what other principle may we expect it? If we do not care enough about it thus to seek it, why should we get it or expect it? If, on the other hand, we have that spirit which will move us so to seek it, we will have faith in Christ. He who starts out with all his heart to seek it will inevitably take his place as an humble follower of Christ. The man who in this Christian land is not a follower of Christ is not really seeking the glory and honor and incorruption which constitute eternal life. If one's reigning thought is spiritual, he is a Christian. If a man is not a Christian, it is because his reigning thought is carnal. According to one's works, which are but the out-going of his reigning thought, will he be judged and his sentence fixed, when he shall stand before the Judge of all the earth.

Chapter VI

WHAT ADVANTAGE HATH THE JEW?

3: 1-8

The judgment of the Great Day will be an impartial judgment. The sentence rendered by the righteous Judge in each case will be an impartial sentence. That is the truth which Paul developed in the second chapter of this Epistle. His object was to show that Jews, as well as Gentiles, needed salvation. The typical Jew thought that descent from Abraham and subjection to ceremonial put him, as a matter of course, above the need of salvation. Such an assumption the Apostle summarily set aside with the simple doctrine that nothing so purely natural as descent from Abraham or so thoroughly external as subjection to ceremonial, could separate the Jews from the rest of the world, when they should appear before an impartial tribunal in the last Day. The Jew would not, because he was a Jew, escape the punishment due his deeds. To be a Jew, in any saving sense, is not to be one outwardly, but inwardly. Circumcision, to have any saving significance, must be that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter.

Having developed the principle laid down in 2: 2, the Apostle opens the third chapter by anticipating an objection to what he has just been saying. The objection he puts in about this way: If what I have been saying is true, it may be asked, "What advantage then

hath the Jew? or, What is the profit in circumcision?" The section of the Epistle now before us he devotes to answering that objection, and other objections that grow out of his answers. We will follow his thought.

We take up his first answer first. If to be a Jew only outwardly is not to be a Jew at all in any saving sense, what advantage have Jews that is not possessed by Gentiles—what profit is there in being a Jew? That is the objection to the Apostle's teaching in chapter two, raised here in the form of a question.

To that question he makes this answer: "Much every way—first of all that they were entrusted with the oracles of God." There were other advantages which he might mention; but first of all, and above all, and as really including all, in the sense that a cause may be said to include its effects, he would mention the fact that to the Jews had been entrusted the oracles of God.

By the "oracles of God" the Apostle meant all the communications which God had made to Israel, with special reference to Messianic promises; and he says it was a great gain to Israel that they had been entrusted with those oracles. They would not, *as Israelites*, escape an impartial judgment. If they did what they condemned in the Gentiles, they would be judged as the Gentiles, with the difference that, on account of their superior opportunities, an impartial sentence would be a severer one. But, although to have been Israelites did not exempt them from judgment according to their deeds, it was nevertheless worth a great deal to them to have been entrusted with the oracles of God.

Their life had been purer as the result of the sacred

deposit. That life had not been, to be sure, what it ought to have been—far from that; *but* it was purer than the life of heathendom. They, doubtless, did some of the things which they condemned in the heathen; but still, as a whole, their life was far from being so degraded. In general, it may be said that the difference was like that between the life of the average moral man among us and the life of a very immoral one; and they had all the benefits of such a difference. No other people ever possessed such life-molding influences as were wrapped up in the “oracles of God;” and no other people were ever, on the whole, so well off in this world. Having been entrusted with these oracles was to them for this world a great gain.

To be entrusted with the oracles of God is to *any* people great temporal gain. It is hard for us to realize what the Bible has been worth to our good country. The whole social fabric—all our civilization—feels the power of that blessed Book. Men who do not know whether Malachi is a prophet of the Old Testament or an apostle of the New are influenced by the Bible. Take away from this country of ours every advantage that has come to it from the Bible, and you would not recognize it as the land in which you were reared.

It may be granted that there are some men to whom we must accord honesty of purpose, when they attempt to discredit the Bible in the interest of humanity and civilization. But, if we give them credit for sincerity, we cannot think they are men of sound judgment. No man who cares for the highest welfare of humanity, even in time, if he is a man of clear vision, can wish the Bible to be less venerated and obeyed than it is.

Whenever a man speaks disrespectfully of the Bible, he may be safely set down as one who is opposed to the Bible because it is opposed to the life he is leading, or as one who, for some reason, is prejudiced, and fails to get a clear vision of what the Bible is worth to the world. An honest, upright man may have doubts about the Bible; but, if he loves his fellow men, and has an eye to see what the Bible has done, and is doing, for men, even in this life, he will not say one word to loosen the hold of that Book upon their hearts and lives. The blatant opposer of the Bible is either shallow-brained or hard-hearted.

Reference was made, awhile ago, to the constitution of things among men as the social *fabric*. We speak of cloth as a fabric. Take a piece of cloth in your hand. It is made up of warp and woof. Unravel it. Take out the threads that run either way. What have you done? You have destroyed the fabric. The cloth you held in your hand a moment ago no longer exists. It has been destroyed by drawing out the warp threads. So it would be with our social fabric if everything contributed to it by the Bible were taken out. It would be destroyed. There would be something left, of course; but it would no more resemble what we now have than those loose woof threads resemble the cloth that has been destroyed.

The man of business does not realize how much of his business opportunity he owes to the Bible. The seeker of pleasure does not realize how far the Bible has contributed to putting comforts within his reach. The weary toiler does not realize how much the Bible has lightened his burdens.

If we had no better reason for extending the knowledge of the Bible than is furnished by its great temporal blessings to men, that would be reason enough to make us put forth much effort in that direction. When we remember, however, that the temporal blessings are but the beginning of blessing to those who come to a saving knowledge of the Christ of the Bible, how we ought to rejoice in the opportunity of doing the very least to extend the knowledge and the love of the Bible, and how anxious we ought to be to do the very most possible! How unspeakably sad is the case of those who try to destroy men's confidence in the precious Book! An army crossing the desert in Africa exhausted their supply of water, and were suffering inexpressibly with heat and thirst. They thought they saw on the horizon a beautiful lake with flourishing palm trees on its bank. Their Arab guide told them that there was in reality neither lake nor tree—that what they saw was only a mirage, a picture in the air. They would not believe him, and insisted that he should deviate from his route, and follow their directions. He refused. They tried to compel him. In the struggle the guide was struck dead. Eager for their anticipated refreshment and repose, they rushed towards the scene of promise. Parched with thirst and scorched by the burning sun, they soon became bewildered, half-blind, faint and feeble, but their increasing sufferings only served to urge them on. Farther they struck into the wild waste. Farther and farther they separated themselves from their dead guide, with whose life had perished the secret of their safety. The unhappy men still stumbled on; and still the visionary lake fled before them. At last, as the sun declined, the deceptive mirage

gradually faded from their sight, leaving only a dreary waste of sand. Then, maddened and despairing, the guilty men, reproaching each other and themselves, threw themselves on the ground in an agony of remorse and despair; and few survived to tell the tale of sin and folly. Alike sinful and foolish and pitiable is the course of those who, looking upon life's mirages, attempt to strike down life's God-given guide, and who, looking upon what they regard as the corpse of that faithful guide, madly rush on into the wild waste of sin.

We pass on to the Apostle's second answer.

It is difficult to discover his exact thought at this point. It seems to be about this: I have declared that to have had the oracles of God committed to them was a very great blessing to the Jews; now the question may arise as to whether the unbelief involved in their rejection of Messiah so far will not cut off the nation, for all time to come, from the Messianic salvation in which case the temporal blessings that have accrued to them from the oracles of God will be much outweighed by this great calamity to the nation of being cut off for the unbelief of a portion. To hold that the nation would thus be cut off forever would be to suppose God unfaithful to his promises. Hence the Apostle asks: If some were without faith, shall their want of faith destroy the faithfulness of God? It is a great thing that they were entrusted with the oracles of God; for what—how does the case stand? If some rejected the Messiah, shall their unbelief destroy the faithfulness of God—cause him to forget all his promises, and move him to cast off the nation forever and deprive them of salvation in Jesus?

To that question Paul gives a most emphatic nega-

tive answer. No matter who may be unfaithful, God remains true to his promises. If you yield yourself up to him, he will take you through this world in what is really the best way for you. It may not be exactly the way you would choose, but it will be the best. All around may sometimes look very dark; but trust his faithfulness and the light will fall upon you. Your burdens may be very heavy; but, if you trust him, they will become much lighter. Your heart may be very sad and sore; but, look up to him, and a sweet peace will enter your soul. You may be in doubt as to duty; but, if you commit your way to him, he will direct you. His faithfulness can be absolutely depended upon. In whatever situation you find yourself, trust him, and all will be well.

If you will yield yourself to him, he will take you at last to glory. For that, also, he is pledged; and his faithfulness will never fail. "An old Scotch woman dwelt in a lonely cottage in the Highlands. She was poor and bedridden; but she was rich in faith. A young minister was accustomed to visit the old saint, more for what he could learn from her than for anything he was able to communicate to her. One day, wishing to try her faith, he proposed this startling question: Suppose that, after all your praying and all your trusting, God should cast you off at last—what then? The old woman raised herself on her elbow and looked him steadily in the face, and said: 'Eh! mon, is that a' the length ye got to yet? Why, mon, God wad be the greater loser. Poor Nanny wad lose her soul, to be sure, and that wad be a sair loss indeed, but God wad lose his character. He knows I've just hung up

my soul and all my hopes upon his ain precious promises; and, if they should be broken, the whole universe wad gang to ruin;' and then, sinking her voice, she added: 'For God wad be a liar.' " If you yield all to him, your glory is as certain as God's character is without defect. Upon his faithfulness to his promises, upon the faultlessness of his character, depends the final entrance into glory of all who come to God through his Son Jesus Christ. He can no more be unfaithful to his promises to all who thus come to him than he can be imperfect and impure and untrue.

It should be said also that he is just as true to his warnings as he is to his promises. Those who do not yield to Christ will die in their sins, and will have their portion among those to whom he will say: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." If there is glory in yielding there is perdition in not yielding.

There is a third question which rises up before the Apostle to be answered. God has not cast off his people, Israel, forever. After a season they will come into the kingdom of Messiah. Their temporary rejection will lead to the conversion of the Gentiles; and, eventually, they will be brought in. The unbelief of the Jews will only serve to set off the faithfulness of God. That being the case, is it not unrighteous in God to punish sinners? If their sin commends, or sets off, or displays to greater advantage, his faithfulness, is he not unrighteous in visiting wrath upon the sin from which he thus reaps advantage? That is the third question that comes up for answer; and here, again, the Apostle gives an emphatic negative answer.

He proves the correctness of his answer by reference to what is granted by the Jew whom he is addressing; namely, a final judgment of the world. If Jews could escape the punishment due their sin of unbelief, because that unbelief set off the faithfulness of God, then there could be no final judgment, as the Jews held, for the simple reason that *all* men would escape upon the same ground that their sin had been turned to good account by the Lord; and, indeed, doing evil, so far from being a reason for punishment, might become a virtue, since good is made to come out of it.

Paul here settles for all time the question as to whether a thing that is wrong may be made right by the good that will come out of it. There is hardly any crime known to men that has not been justified by somebody on the ground that good would come out of it. God does not justify wrong under any circumstances. He takes hold of the evil that men do, and he brings good out of it. But he does not justify those who do the evil; nor does he shield them from the punishment due. No matter how great benefits may come to our fellow men from wrong doing on our part, we get no credit for it in heaven. The benefits are theirs; the punishment is ours; and the glory of bringing good out of evil is the Lord's.

What is the lesson? It is this: Stand for what you think is right. No matter how much the doing of wrong may promise you of suffering escaped, or of comfort gained, or even of blessing to others, be sure that you stand by what you believe is right.

Chapter VII

NO SHELTER FOR ANY

3: 9-20

With this section the Apostle concludes the argument which he began at 1:18. He there started out to show that there is a universal need of salvation. The universal need of salvation grows out of the universal reign of sin, which subjects men to condemnation. From the eighteenth verse of the first chapter to the end of that chapter he developed his doctrine in the case of the Gentiles. The second chapter is taken up with showing that the Jews cannot claim exemption from sin and condemnation. The first eight verses of the third chapter are given to answering objections that might arise, from the Jewish side, to this leveling process by which the Apostle would seem to have bereft the chosen people of all advantage or superiority over the heathen. The objection that the Jew might raise is this: If our position as the chosen people does not exempt us from judgment as sinners, if we are no better off in that respect than Gentiles, what advantage is there in our position? To that objection the Apostle has answered that there is much advantage in every way, and above all else, there is the advantage that to Israel were committed the oracles of God.

After answering questions which would be started

by that statement of advantage, he begins the section now under consideration by asking: "What then? Have we any defense, and shelter?" He is about to close up the case as to the Jews. He pauses to ask how the case stands. "Is there for us any excuse, any defense, any screen that will save us from an impartial judgment?" The answer is negative and emphatic. The proof of this answer he gives in the preceding demonstration that Jews and Gentiles are alike under sin.

This demonstration he now re-enforces by a series of quotations from the Old Testament Scriptures. The passages are gathered from here and there, and are so many lines in the picture the Apostle draws. They treat of sin in general, and then of two particular phases of it; namely, bitter speech and violent conduct; and, finally, they refer it to its source—lack of proper feeling towards God.

The spiritually-conceited Jew, however, might say that some of these passages, at least those which made sin universal, were spoken originally with reference to the Gentiles, and hence had no application to his people. Paul, anticipating such a position, says: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God." It is a potent truth, a truth which all must admit, that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, those for whom it was published. It follows, therefore, that no matter about whom the words of this revelation were spoken, they were spoken to the Jews for their instruction. In this

particular case, it was the purpose of God that they should learn their own sinfulness from these utterances, and their mouths should be stopped from claiming anything like exemption from judgment.

Paul here stands upon the principle that among mankind there is a fundamental moral unity. It is because he stands there that he can answer the Jewish objector as he does. The Jew says: "The passages you have quoted to prove that all are under sin were spoken with reference to Gentiles, and, therefore, are not to the point." Paul replies: "They certainly are to the point. It is true they were spoken with reference to the Gentiles; but they were spoken to you, and it was intended by Jehovah that you should apply them to yourselves, upon the ground that there is a fundamental moral unity among mankind—a moral unity such that the heart pollution indicated by these words of Scripture as possessed by the Gentiles cannot be entirely disclaimed by you."

We are here taught that, no matter what the differences among men as to their external lives, there is in all a deep-seated moral disease that needs to be cured.

The evidence of this disease is universal. There is not to be found a man, woman, or child, who does not exhibit some of its symptoms; and to have a single symptom is enough to prove the presence of the disease in the one presenting the symptom. There are many symptoms of physical disorder. The tongue, the skin, the temperature of the body, the pulse—many things may be interrogated as to one's physical soundness. The physician, however, does not find it necessary to discover all possible symptoms before he can be assured

that there is disorder. One is enough for that. To determine the particular kind of disorder, he needs, in some cases, at least, to know all the symptoms; but, simply to be sure of the fact that there is disorder, one symptom is enough. So it is with moral disorder. The fact that it is present does not need to be proved by a variety of symptoms. For that one is sufficient. It would probably require a demon incarnate to furnish all; everybody furnishes some.

This disease is held, more or less, in check. Heredity is holding it down here; good training is hedging about there; public opinion is crippling it at another point; faith in Christ is grappling with it on still another line. Praise the Lord for every influence that helps, in the least, to destroy the power and check the progress of sin in any soul! We do not realize how much we owe to these restraining forces. We do not realize how much they accomplish for the peace and welfare of society, nor how much they save each one of us from the bitter fruit of transgression. As a noted criminal would be passing his house to execution, Dr. Ives, a noted minister, it is said, was often heard to remark: "There goes Dr. Ives." When his young friends to whom he spoke asked him what he meant, he would speak of the natural corruption of the heart, and would appeal to the experience of his hearers, whether they had not felt the movements of those very passions, prejudices, lusts, whose direct tendency was to produce the crimes for which these offenders satisfied the claims of public justice, and which were prevented by the restraining grace of God from carrying them to the same dreadful fate. Another minister, who had

repeatedly visited a criminal in prison and attended him on the scaffold, made an address at the execution and closed by laying his hand on his breast and saying: "But for restraining grace I had been brought by this corrupt heart to the same condition with this unhappy man." We cannot know what any of us would be or what the community in which we live would be, if sin were not restrained.

This disease of sin, if not cured, will eventually result in death. A disease of the body, if not cured, results in physical death. As physical disease uncured must eventually result in physical death, so the disease of sin, if not cured, must result in spiritual death. There is no difference in the certainty of the result in the two cases. There is a great difference, but it is a difference in the character of the result—not in the certainty of it. In one case, death is the cessation of physical sensations; it is physical dissolution. In the other there is not cessation of spiritual existence, but spiritual chaos and misery. A cure that will avert such a result is the supreme human need.

Paul warns against seeking such a cure in external appliances. "By works of law," he says, "shall no flesh be justified." Such utterances as he quoted from the Old Testament Scriptures had behind them the purpose of God that Israel should learn their own exposure to judgment—an exposure which grew out of their indwelling sin, on one hand, and the inability of works of law to justify, on the other.

Why is it that external appliances will not cure the disease of sin? It is because they deal only with symptoms, and do not reach down to the root of the

disease. "For through the law," says Paul, "cometh the knowledge of sin." The Law holds before men a standard, and thus shows them, by their shortcomings and transgressions, how sinful they are. But it is entirely beyond the power of the Law to purify them. If, for any reason, we attempt to come up to the standard presented by the Law, and if we succeed in any mere external conformity to its requirements, we are not thereby radically changed in heart or purpose. A habit of transgression or of neglect may be corrected; but only a symptom has been treated. The cause, the root, of the difficulty, has not been reached. The simple performance of a duty that has, hitherto, been neglected, or the turning away from an evil course that has hitherto been followed, will not change the heart. Such a change of conduct may indicate a change of heart, but it does not produce such a change. It is not that the change of conduct purifies the heart, but the purification of heart leads to the change of conduct.

This warning of Paul not to look to external appliances to cure the disease of sin is one of the most difficult warnings for men to heed. It is, indeed, marvelous how hard men do find it to understand that the disease is internal, and needs an internal remedy.

For example, it is told of a preacher in Ireland that he had the following experience with a nobleman. This nobleman devoted considerable amounts of money to objects of charity. Among his worthy deeds, he had erected an elegant house of worship at his own expense. With great pleasure he showed the preacher his estate, pointed to the church, and said: "Now, sir, do you not think that will merit heaven?" The minister was silent

awhile, and then said: "Pray, my lord, and what may your estate be worth a year?" "I imagine," said the nobleman, "about thirteen or fourteen hundred pounds." "And do you think, my lord," replied the minister, "that God would sell heaven even for thirteen or fourteen thousand pounds?" I have read of a monument with this inscription upon it: "Sacred to the memory of Edward Malloy, the friend of humanity, the father of the poor; he employed the wealth of this world only to procure the riches of the next; and, leaving a balance on the books of life, he made heaven debtor to mercy."

These are illustrations of how men are prone to suppose that sin, as a bar to heaven, may be gotten over by good deeds. These particular illustrations may be furnished by people who had been *trained* to look at the matter in that way. But there seems to be a sort of innate disposition in men so to look at it. This is brought out in a story of a poor, weak-minded man. The man's pastor interested himself to give particular instruction in the plan of salvation, in the hope that, by patience, perseverance, and plainness, he might be able to bring this parishioner to understand the simplest truths of the gospel. One day, after the minister had worked with him for about a year, telling him over and over again that only in the Lord Jesus Christ was to be found salvation for men, he was asked to tell how he hoped to be saved. He was silent for a moment, and then replied: "Don't you think, sir, that if I was to spend a cold frosty night under a hawthorn bush, it would go a good way towards it?"

So strong is the disposition in men to think that sin, as a bar to heaven, is to be gotten over by something they are to do, that a great deal of plain instruction

often fails to overcome that disposition in some who are very far from being weak-minded.

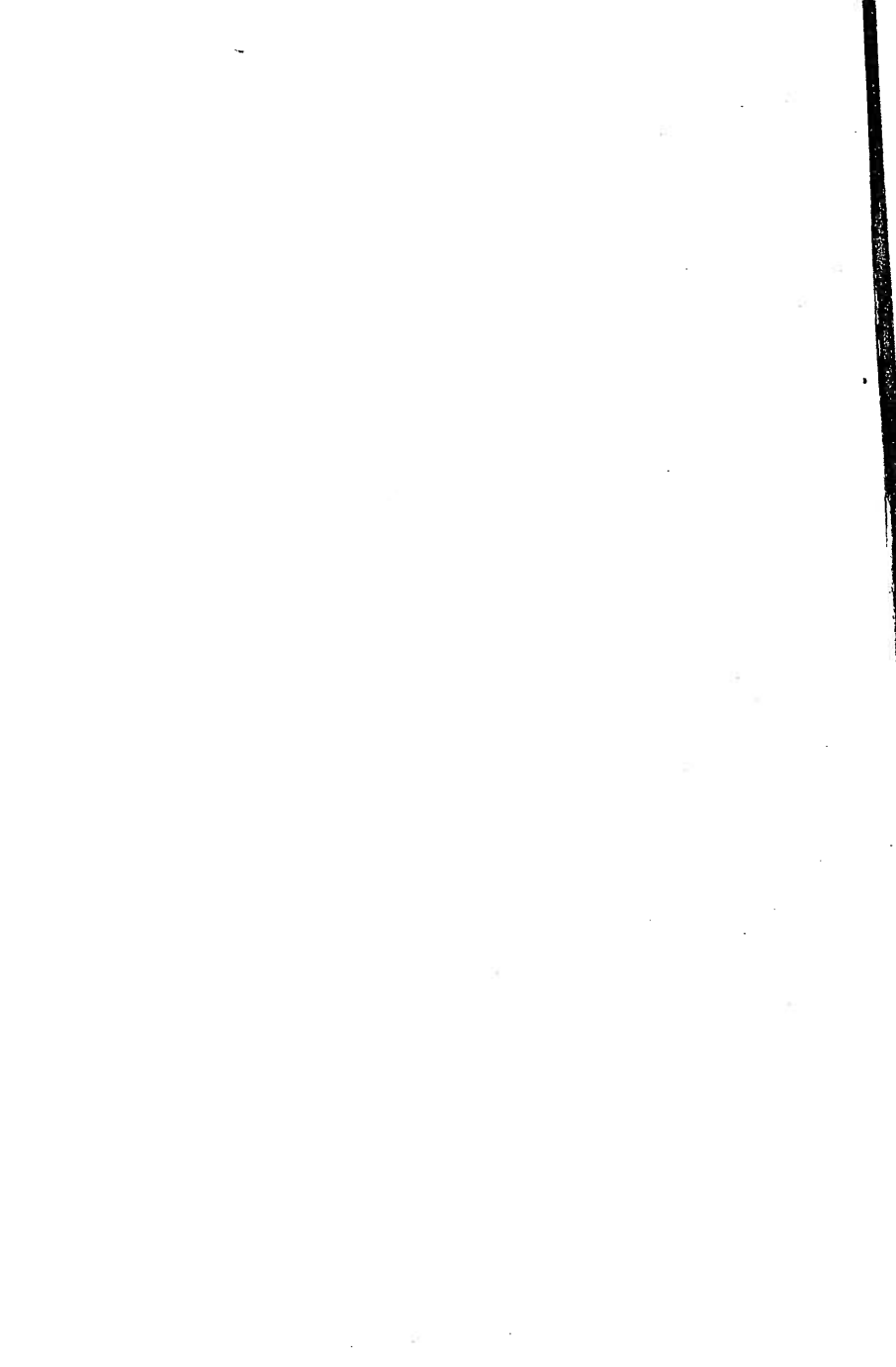
One reason why men are so prone to think they will go to heaven upon the merit of what they do, is that they fail to perceive that sin is a bar to heaven, because it is a disease of the soul, the natural result of which is spiritual chaos—a disease which, if not cured at the root, will of necessity develop into perdition.

You go to the bedside of a fever patient and what do you observe? A hot skin may be the most obvious symptom. You are not a physician; and you know little about disease and its treatment, we will say. If you were obliged to do something, you would naturally try to reduce the heat of the skin. That might help to conserve the strength of the patient, and so give Nature a little better chance to throw off the disease. But a physician who did no more than try to reduce the temperature of the skin would be called a quack. The skilled physician would say that the treatment must reach the disease, the cause of the hot skin. To that end he would apply the best remedy known to him until the disease should be eradicated.

Every soul of man is suffering from the disease of sin. It is needless to expect that disease to be cured by external appliances. Such treatment of it is spiritual quackery on the part of any who pretend to know what they are doing. Under such treatment a soul will go on in its decline to its grave in perdition. There is a Physician who can touch it at its roots. The soul that puts itself under his treatment will have applied to its disease a remedy which cannot fail to work a cure. Put yourself in his hands and the healing process is at once begun!

PART III
THE GRACIOUS METHOD OF
SALVATION

3: 21—5: 21



Chapter VIII

THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

3: 21-26

This section contains the heart of the gospel revelation. It has been called the "marrow of divinity." Luther said: "This is the chief point, and the very central place of the Epistle and of the whole Bible." "In these verses," says another, "is the very quintessence of the Pauline doctrine concerning Christ. Whoever understands them understands the Apostle; whoever misunderstands them runs the risk of misunderstanding the entire Epistle." "This," says still another, "is a full exposition of the whole business; therefore, the verses should be most diligently studied by us." Here is what a great scholar calls the "nerve" of the argument; another calls it "a brief compend of the divine wisdom;" while still another exclaims: "Lo! here, here is the great and ineffable mystery of all Christian philosophy." On one occasion the poet Cowper, we are told, was well-nigh drifted into despair and gives this account of his relief: "I flung myself into a chair near the window, and, seeing a Bible there, ventured once more to apply to it for comfort and instruction. The first verse I saw was the twenty-fifth verse of the third chapter of Romans. Immediately I received strength to believe; and the full beams of the sun of righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of

the atonement he had made for my pardon and complete justification. In a moment I believed, and received the peace of the Gospel. Unless the Almighty Arm had been under me I think I should have been overwhelmed with gratitude and joy. My eyes filled with tears, and my voice choked with transport. I could only look up to heaven in silent fear, overwhelmed with love and wonder. But the work of the Holy Spirit is best described in his own words—It is joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

At this point, let us glance back over the ground and see how far we have traveled in coming to the passage before us.

The first seven verses of the Epistle we found to be salutatory. They contained the Apostle's salutation to the Saints at Rome, wherein he drew an official bond between himself and them.

The next eight verses we discovered to be conciliatory; and in them the Apostle drew a bond of affection between himself and his readers.

Up to that point we had gone through fifteen verses; and the Introduction proper was completed, verses sixteen and seventeen being transitional and stating the theme of the Epistle: The gospel the power of God unto salvation, because it reveals God's righteousness for unrighteous men.

Such a gospel, however, would not be a matter of interest to men, unless men needed salvation. Accordingly, the Apostle at once, with the eighteenth verse of the first chapter, began to show the universal need of salvation by showing universal condemnation. From the eighteenth verse to the end of the first chapter he

dealt with Gentile condemnation; and in the second chapter he showed that the same exposure to divine judgment was true of the Jews.

The first eight verses of the third chapter he devoted to answering Jewish objections to his doctrine; and in the passage from the ninth verse to the twentieth he closed up that part of his argument by an appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures to show that all are sinners and that all are, therefore, in need of some gracious means of salvation.

This review brings us to the section of the Epistle now to be considered. Here we enter upon the study of a part which closes with the end of the fifth chapter. Verses twenty-one and twenty-two really give us what may be called the text of the whole part. The general subject of the part is: The Gracious Method of Salvation. Four great ideas are developed in the treatment of the subject. They are: the nature of that method of salvation—what it is; the harmony of the method with the Old Testament revelation; the certainty of justification here and hereafter; the universal phase of the justification provided for. The first of these great ideas is developed in our section, verses twenty-one to twenty-six.

A divine righteousness has been provided. Men need some gracious method of salvation. All are sinners. They cannot possibly save themselves. In order to be saved, they must be righteous; but they have no righteousness of their own, and, from the nature of the case, they cannot work out a righteousness for themselves. The helplessness and hopelessness of this condition is lighted up by the truly wonderful state-

ment of verse twenty-one of our passage: "But now, apart from law, a righteousness of God hath been manifested." Unrighteous men may be justified, not because they can offer to God a righteousness of their own wrought out in obedience to law, but because God has provided a righteousness for them. It is his righteousness provided by him for them and offered to them freely. So far as they are concerned, there is no law in it—it is "apart from law."

This righteousness so essential to justification of men has been provided by God, through the propitiation of Christ. In verse twenty-five the Apostle says that God set forth, or forward, or that he ordained, Christ to be propitiatory.

Two words here need special attention. They are the words "ordained" and "propitiatory." The authorized, or King James, Version says "set forth," instead of "ordained," and "propitiation" instead of "propitiatory." Painstaking study convinces me that the reading ought to be "ordained" and "propitiatory." The Apostle did not mean to call attention to the cross as a spectacle; and so we had better not use an expression which might suggest that as his meaning. However true that idea of a spectacle might be in general, it does not seem to be intended here. The idea is that of setting aside for a work, and not that of setting forth as a spectacle. Hence we truly express the idea when we say that God ordained Christ to be propitiatory. We should use the word "propitiatory" instead of "propitiation" because that is what Paul really said. He might have said "propitiation" just as easily, if he had wished to do so. He said "propitiatory" no doubt

because he wished to bring out the facts; namely, that Jesus was both priest and sacrifice—that he was not only the propitiatory offering but was also the offerer of the offering, and that his offering was a voluntary one.

We are here taught that *Christ* is “propitiatory.” Not his death alone, as is sometimes supposed, but his life, also, has a place in the propitiation. It is Christ in the entirety, the wholeness of his person—Christ as the divine-human Being, living and dying, who becomes propitiatory. That historical manifestation from Bethlehem to Calvary—the divine-human Person who passed thus across the stage of human action and suffering—was ordained by Jehovah to be propitiatory, and propitiatory “through faith in his blood,” “his blood” as the consummation of the righteous life “unto death.”

What does “Christ as propitiatory” mean? We speak of propitiating an enemy. When Jacob was returning from the house of Laban and heard that Esau, whom he had wronged, was coming to meet him, he was afraid and sent presents to appease the anger of his brother. That was a propitiatory offering. It was intended to buy off the anger of an enemy. That, no doubt, is the idea underlying heathen sacrifices. They are propitiatory in the sense that those who offer them suppose that the gods are angry and may be appeased by these offerings.

Is that the idea of the propitiation of Christ? Hardly. It is not that God is angry, and must be placated. Right here the Apostle expounds his idea of propitiation. He says that God ordained Christ to be propitiatory for two reasons: (1) for “the demon-

stration of righteousness"—not for the placating of anger but for the showing of his righteousness; (2) that "he himself might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

The demonstration, or showing, of his righteousness—what is the significance of that? For four thousand years God had seemed to condone sin by passing it over without anything like general and adequate punishment. Something must be done which would set the righteous element of his character into clear light before the world. There must be demonstration of his righteousness.

Another word occurring in this connection needs revision. It is the word "remission" in verse twenty-five. By "remission" we mean forgiveness. That is not the Apostle's meaning in this place, as the King James would have it. He was referring, not to forgiveness of sins in the past, but to the passing of them over without punishment.

This passing over of the sins of man, in the past, had left the principle of righteousness in God's character without any adequate revelation. Indeed, that quality had been obscured. It did look as if men might, sometimes at least, sin without suffering for their sin. But in Christ—in his holy life and in his death for the sin of the world—God demonstrated to the world that he requires holiness of men, and that sin must be punished!

The propitiation then was for the demonstration of the righteousness of God. That was one reason for it. Another reason was in order that God "might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus"

—that he might be righteous and at the same time treat as righteous those who are unrighteous, if they believe in Christ. Men are unrighteous, God is love. He would treat men as if they were righteous. That is the inclination of the God who is love. But in that character of love there is a quality that raises a bar to unconditional pardon. If unrighteous men are to be forgiven and treated as righteous, something must be done to remove the bar. Forgiveness must not be approval of sin. That must be placed beyond all misunderstanding. By the propitiation of Christ it is placed beyond all misunderstanding. In his sacrificial life and death sin has been forever judged; and so the way has been opened for a righteous God to forgive unrighteous men. Jesus bore our sins, and gives us his righteousness. He took our place and allowed sin to be judged in him that we might be righteous, as clothed in his righteousness.

The manner in which this divine righteousness is to become available for individuals is also set forth in our section. Sin has been forever judged in Jesus Christ for men. There is no longer any need that it be judged in men for themselves. To avoid this each has only to accept for himself the judgment upon sin that Jesus suffered. It is by faith that the righteousness of Christ, the divine righteousness provided for unrighteous men, is made available to the individual.

Mark well the fact that faith is only the hand that receives the blessing. We are not saved *by* faith, but *through* faith. Faith is the medium, the channel, through which the grace of God in Christ comes to us. It is not faith that saves, but Christ received by

faith. It is not looking to Christ by faith that saves, but Christ looked to by faith. Faith has no more merit than works, if it be considered simply as a good thing done; for then it falls back into the general class of works, and cannot be the cause procuring justification. I am an empty vessel; and my faith is but the hand that holds up the vessel to the place where the water is flowing.

The righteousness of Christ, wrought out in his life and death, is offered to sinners; and as many as accept that righteousness are forgiven and justified. This personal acceptance is necessary. Until we accept the righteousness thus provided for us we do not condemn sin in our own lives, we do not admit the eternal principle that sin must be judged, if not in Christ for us, then in ourselves for ourselves.

Chapter IX

JEWISH FEELING AND THE LAW

3: 27-31

The Apostle has shown the universal need of some gracious method of salvation growing out of the universal reign of sin and condemnation; and he has set forth such a method of salvation. This last he did in 3: 21-26.

Standing now upon the platform which he has wrought out and laid down, he looks about him for certain Jewish feelings and notions with regard to justification.

The first of these is their glorying, or boasting. "Where, then, is the glorying?" he asks. A settled conviction of the Jews was that they occupied a position of special privilege and immunity. They thought they were already justified. They were Israelites. They were children of promise. They had "Abraham as their father." In this privileged position they observed certain forms and ceremonies which separated them from all the rest of the world. They had reason to glory, they supposed, because they had come to connect justification with these forms and ceremonies. They thought they wrought out justification for themselves.

But Paul sees no room for glorying. "It is excluded." It has, however, not been violently excluded, but legally shut out. "By what sort of law?" Not by the

law of works, surely. That is to say, it has not been excluded by the Law of God, or Law of Moses, as that Law has taken shape in their minds. In their estimation that Law is only a law of ceremonial, a law enjoining externals. If justification could result from those forms and ceremonies, those "works" in which they trusted, then they might, indeed, have ground for glorying; and, therefore, glorying is not excluded by the law which enjoins them. If the question should come up in the form as to whether the Law in its integrity as a perfect standard of life excludes boasting, the answer would be: Yes, it does! And the reason is that the Law in that view of it only condemns, and can only condemn, because it is not kept. But that is not the form of the question here. It is rather a question as to whether glorying is excluded by the Law in the narrower sense in which the Jews received it; that is, as enjoining certain "works" which they performed, and upon the performance of which they claimed justification as a right, as something wrought out by themselves. The Law, in that view of it, does not exclude glorying.

Glorying, nevertheless, is excluded, not by that kind of law, to be sure, but, by a law of very different sort. It is the law of faith—the law that is concerned with appropriating the gracious means of justification set forth in the preceding part of the Epistle.

How does faith exclude glorying? In the first place, it recognizes one's lost and helpless condition; and, in the second place, it accepts a gracious deliverance.

If man were not needy, lost and helpless, he might glory. But realizing that he is lost, and utterly help-

less for saving himself, he accepts the deliverance that is graciously offered him by the Lord; and, in doing that, he completely "signs away" every vestige of right to glory. He is under condemnation, and must so remain unless he is graciously delivered. If he is *graciously* delivered, he has no room left for glorying. And that is just the position in which faith places him. He is *graciously* delivered; and so has no ground for glorying.

Thus it is that glorying is excluded, by the law of faith, from the scheme of justification which the Apostle has set forth. Spiritual pride of every sort is cut up by the root. If I am justified it is for no merit of mine. It is all free, unmerited grace. If I make progress in the divine life, it is because the Saviour graciously blesses me by imparting to me more and more of his own life.

I am, of course, to appreciate my position as a redeemed soul. I am to understand that I have a royal birthright, that I am the child of a King, and have a heritage of glory. But to realize all that, and to be profoundly grateful for it, and to rejoice exceedingly in it, is a very different attitude from that of spiritual pride and conceit. To recognize our high birth and destiny and to rejoice in it and to glorify God for it is very different from glorifying ourselves for it.

The second Jewish characteristic for which the Apostle finds no room in his gospel scheme is their *exclusiveism*. "Is God the God of Jews only?" he asks. The Jews supposed that they had a sort of special dispensation, a kind of private and aristocratic justification, a sort of side track to Paradise.

But Jehovah is *one* God. That the Jews would readily admit. That was a fundamental doctrine of their law. Being one, he would not suffer any aristocratic arrangement in connection with the great matter of justification, which is of such tremendous importance to all of his human creatures. It is in accordance with his character as the one only God of all that he justifies the circumcision and the uncircumcision in the same way; namely, by faith. Whatever differences of a minor or temporal kind might exist among men, it could not be consistent with the unity of God that there should be allowed any difference in the requirement for the bestowal of the great, paramount blessing of justification. *That* must be granted to all upon the very same condition. God had, to be sure, called out Israel from among all other peoples, but that was for a pedagogic purpose. It was not that they might be saved in some peculiar, esoteric way, but that they might perform a service in bringing all the world to a knowledge of the one way. There was but one way; and their peculiar position in the world as a selected people did not change their personal relation to that way.

There is still but one way of justification, and so but one way into the kingdom of Christ. The learned and the unlearned, the rich and the poor, the great and the small, the children of Christian parents and of ungodly parents, *all* must enter through the one door of justification by grace through faith—a faith that recognizes their own utter need and helplessness, and that lays hold of the gracious hand of God.

Again, standing upon this evangelical platform which he has built, the Apostle enquires whether he has de-

stroyed the Law. His answer is that he really establishes it.

It is true that this scheme lays small store by the law of ordinances as a means of justification. But the Law, as a standard of life, is really emphasized. The Law in the depth of its purity and spirituality had been upset, thrown down, trampled upon, by Jews as well as Gentiles. The Apostle's scheme of justification, so far from upsetting the Law, really sets it up. It has been upset; and this scheme sets it up.

How is that? Nothing like the transaction of Calvary asserts the dignity of the moral law and so bans any violation of that law. Calvary forever places in clear light the incorruptible righteousness of God. It forever warns the world that sin will surely be punished. The Law is made the standard—not the Law as simply commanding certain forms and ceremonies, certain “works,” but the Law in all its purity and spirituality. Any violation of *that* Law is sin; and any sin is sure to meet with its proper punishment, which is death. On Calvary the sin of the world was judged. Now he who accepts the expiation made on Calvary puts his own sin under the judgment which was there passed upon all sin; and so he bows to the majesty and purity of that Law which was there vindicated.

Paul, indeed, says that “a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the Law.” But he nowhere teaches that justifying faith is ever found actually existing apart from works. His doctrine is that justification is based upon faith alone; but it by no means implies that faith ever exists alone. In the transaction of justification “works” play no part whatever.

Faith is the party, so to speak, upon whom the divine grace bestows the favor of justification. But, while faith is the only party that is considered in the transaction, she is not the only party present. F. W. Robertson well expresses the truth in the case when he says: "Faith alone justifies; but not the faith which is alone." The Confession of Faith adopted by the Puritan Fathers at a Synod in Cambridge, 1648, says: "Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness is alone the instrument of justification; yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love." Luther said: "It is as impossible to separate works from faith as to separate heat and light from fire." The faith which Paul sets forth as the only ground of justification has in it the seed from which all the good deeds of Christian conduct and all the rich graces of Christian character may be developed. That he will bring out in a later part of the Epistle. "According to his doctrinal scheme, believers are created in Christ Jesus for good works, and are to be zealous for good works, and to be rich in good works."

If men escape the death penalty due their sins, they must accept the righteousness of Christ with an earnest purpose to endeavor to become like him in righteousness.

Chapter X

TESTED BY AN OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLE

4: 1-25

In the closing verses of the third chapter of the Epistle the Apostle held that his thesis excludes Jewish glorying and Jewish exclusivism, and that instead of destroying it establishes the Law. Now he proposes to test his thesis by turning in upon it the light of the great classical Old Testament instance of justification. It is the case of Abraham. "What shall we say, then, that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?" That is to say, What in the way of justification did he accomplish by his own "works"?

That is the way he takes up this classical Hebrew case. But the connection of thought now becomes obscure. We must understand something between the first verse and the second. The style is very condensed, even elliptical. The second verse does not catch right on to the first. We must understand the Apostle to have had in mind a thought of this kind: This question about Abraham is a very important one in the present connection. Understanding a thought like that to have been in his mind unexpressed, we have a natural connection for the second verse. This is an important question; "for," says he, "if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory;" and, if Abraham had ground for glorying, then the gospel scheme,

the thesis which I have propounded, falls through. The Apostle would go on to say, "for I have declared that glorying is excluded by my scheme." "But," he would continue, "this supposition is not true. You may hold, if you wish, that, as compared with others, Abraham had ground for glorying. I will not say that he was not a superior man, that it was not a great deal to be an Abraham, that, looking manward, earthward, he had no cause for glorying; but I will say that, looking Godward, he certainly was entirely without cause to glory with regard to the matter of justification. This is proved by Scripture; for the Scripture says that Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. David, also, speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord reckoneth righteousness apart from works."

"Yes," the Jewish objector might say, "Abraham *was* justified on the ground of his faith, and David *does* pronounce blessing upon those to whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works. That is admitted. But did not circumcision have *something* to do with Abraham's justification? And did not David's blessing apply to those of the circumcision alone?"

Paul's reply to that objection is overwhelming. So far from being true that circumcision had anything to do with procuring Abraham's justification, it is a matter of record that he was justified while he was in uncircumcision, while he was a Gentile, or, rather, before the distinction between Jew and Gentile was established. He was justified, not as a *Jew*, but as a *man*.

Thus it was shown by the record that Abraham's own personal justification was based upon faith abso-

lutely alone. Circumcision was added only as a *seal* of the righteousness of faith. As a seal is put upon a paper to declare its validity, so this rite was added as a declaration of the divine approval of Abraham's faith, as the divine declaration of its acceptance, of its validity as a ground of justification.

So much for Abraham's own personal justification. But how about the case of his natural descendants? Was it not the divine intention that he should stand at the head of a community, a long line of descendants, a people distinguished from all others? And, though he was justified on the ground of his faith, were not those descendants to be justified on account of their connection with him by a natural descent, and on account of the outward sign of that descent?

Paul's answer shows that such an idea is at utmost variance with the truth. God did, indeed, intend that Abraham should stand at the head of a community. But the divine *ideal* was not a community united to him only by natural descent, and simply by an outward mark in the flesh. Far from it! The divine ideal was a community united to Abraham, first of all, by faith. Circumcision was given as the seal of a faith-righteousness, imputed to Abraham while he was yet out in the wide world as a Gentile, as a *man*; and it was thus given with the divine purpose that he should be the father, not of the circumcision alone, but of the believing, whether circumcised or uncircumcised, and of only the believing—not alone of those who were like him simply in possessing the seal, but, first of all and above all, of those who were like him in possessing the faith upon which the seal was given.

That this was the divine intent is proved by the fact that the promise made to Abraham and his seed was based, not upon a righteousness of law, but a righteousness of faith. That the promise *was* based upon a righteousness of faith was a matter of record. If any one doubted, he could easily go to record and find that this was true, that the promise was made to Abraham in uncircumcision. But that was not all that could be said about this phase of the subject. It was really a matter of doctrinal necessity that the promise should be conditioned upon a righteousness of faith. "The Law worketh wrath;" and hence, if the promise had been conditioned upon a legal righteousness, the promise would have been "made to none effect," because by its very terms, by the very condition upon which it was based, it would have been rendered impossible of fulfillment. Besides, on that supposition, Abraham's faith would be "made void," emptied of all its significance and power. The promise was, therefore, based upon the righteousness of faith, that it might be a matter of grace, and might be realized by all, irrespective of nationality.

The fitness of Abraham to stand at the head of this great community of believers is brought out with great force in verses eighteen to twenty-two. This is done by a portrayal of the extraordinary character of his faith. His faith was pre-eminent; and he was signally fitted to stand out at the head of the world's great community of believers—at the head of that mighty column which should stretch down through the ages, of those who should believe God, and be justified upon the ground of their faith.

In the closing verses of the chapter the Apostle applies the principle of Abraham's justification. God revealed himself in a certain way to Abraham; and Abraham accepted him in the form in which he presented himself. This acceptance of Jehovah, as thus presented, was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. Now, then, he presents himself to us in the person of Jesus Christ. That is the form in which he comes to us. To do as Abraham did, we must accept him as he thus presents himself to us; and, if we do that, our acceptance of him will be reckoned to us as righteousness. That is the broad application which Paul makes of the principle underlying the justification of Abraham.

Thus it was that he brought his thesis to the test of Abraham's case, the great classical case of the Israelites. His thesis has stood the test. He has shown that Abraham was justified in the way in which all men, according to his scheme, must be justified. Can anything be clearer than that Paul has relentlessly cut up by the root all legalism in every form? And has he not borne down, with special force upon circumcision, the central rite of the legalism with which he was called upon to contend?

Yet a great American theologian wrote: "All the Jews were professors of the true religion, and constituted the visible church in which by divine appointment their children were included. This is the broad and enduring basis of infant church membership."

It is a curious intellectual phenomenon that a man of such acuteness and learning should be able to study this chapter of Romans, and then hold that the Jewish

rite of circumcision was divinely intended to be brought over into the Christian system in the form of baptism! Why could he not see that Paul here gathered himself up in the might of his scriptural knowledge and his dialectical skill to cut up and to destroy legalism root and branch? Why could he not see that the Apostle wished to leave not a single rootlet from which the vicious tree might again spring up?

Chapter XI

TESTED BY THE FUTURE

5: 1-11

The Apostle now brings his doctrine of justification to another test. In the fourth chapter of the Epistle he brought it to the test of the great Old Testament case of Abraham's justification. That may be said to have been a test for validity. He was willing to stake the validity of his doctrine upon that test. The doctrine stood the test. It was shown from the record that Abraham's justification was based upon faith. In 5: 1-11, he brings his doctrine to the test of the future. Is it a doctrine that will take hold of the other world? Or does it simply furnish deliverance from condemnation for past sins?

In the first and second chapters he had spoken of the "wrath of God which was revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who repress the truth in unrighteousness," and of "treasuring up wrath for the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God." The first of these expressions referred to condemnation in time, and the second to condemnation in Eternity. So far as anything the Apostle had hitherto said was concerned, his doctrine of justification might have seemed to dispose only of condemnation for past offenses. Those who believe on Christ are justified—that is to say, their past

sins are forgiven—with regard to the past they are treated as though they had not sinned. But now, as the justified look out into the future, they question whether their justification will hold good—whether, by virtue thereof, they will be able to stand in the day of judgment. This question is made more serious by the fact that tribulation still comes upon them. Is that tribulation sent by the Lord in punishment for sin? If so, may they not still have sin, the punishment of which will be meted out in eternity?

To meet that questioning and to allay apprehension along that line, the Apostle now turns his attention to showing that assurance of the believer's final salvation is involved in the scheme of justification which he has propounded. Three propositions will, perhaps, cover his treatment of that phase of his subject.

The first of these is: the believer's assurance of final salvation is implied in the peace—condition which has been inaugurated for him by the death of Christ accepted by faith. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Our position is not one in which we are simply absolved from our former sins—a position which would promise nothing for the future. Justification by grace through faith carries with it much more than that. A peace condition has been inaugurated, a peace relation has been established between us and God. God has ceased to be our enemy, as he must have been, by virtue of his righteousness before we believed on Christ.

The situation is not like that in which an enemy still retains his enmity, although for some reason he has remitted the offenses which have been committed against him. But the situation is that in which we have been placed by remission resulting from removal of enmity. The enmity with which the righteous God must regard sinners on account of sin has been removed by the atoning work of Christ accepted by us; and the enmity being removed, the offenses are remitted as a matter of course—remission is involved in the removal of enmity.

The characteristic feature of our position is not the obliteration of our past offenses, but the withdrawal of the divine enmity. The obliteration of our past offenses as cause for punishment was involved in the withdrawal of the divine enmity; and something more was involved in it. That something more is precisely the matter here in hand. It is the believer's security against condemnation in the future. This peace relation is a permanent one; and, standing in the position in which it places us, we triumph in the hope of the glory of God. We congratulate ourselves upon the assurance we have of final salvation, of escape from wrath in the last Day, and entrance upon the heavenly glory.

Of course when we speak of the divine enmity against sinners we do not mean that there is any unholy element in that enmity. There is nothing of the vindictive and vengeful which is suggested by enmity among men. There is nothing which excludes pity and compassion—nothing which excludes that divine love that moved the Father to give the Son to die for men. It is that holy repugnance to sin which must be felt by the Holy God, and which must be directed to-

wards the sinner just so far as the sinner identifies himself with his sin, and "makes it the principle of his personal life."

The Apostle teaches, now, that this divine enmity has been removed in all cases where Christ has been accepted by faith. Between these believing souls and God a peace condition has been inaugurated which involves, not only forgiveness of past sins, but also assurance of final deliverance from wrath in the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

A second proposition of the three by which we are trying to cover the Apostle's treatment of that phase of his subject handled in the section of the Epistle before us is: The believer's assurance of final salvation is confirmed by tribulation. "We glory in our tribulation also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope."

He here treats tribulation as a blessing. His idea is not that the believer glories in spite of tribulation—not that the believer refuses to allow his happiness in the Lord to be destroyed by tribulation, but that he makes tribulation a ground of rejoicing. We must not, however, suppose that Paul's doctrine is that the believer courts calamity and suffering. That would be an unnatural thing to do—unnatural in the highest and broadest sense—unnatural in the sense that whatever is so is not true. It is not in harmony with any sort of nature, unless it is perverse nature, to court calamity and suffering.

But, while tribulation is not to be desired and sought, it is, nevertheless, to be made a ground of rejoicing

when it comes. It may be made a stepping stone to a higher life. It is one of the "all things" that work together for good to those who love God. How that comes about is shown when Paul says that "tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope." Tribulation works in the believer the grace of "endurance." It is a somewhat more active grace than "patience." This "endurance" worketh "experience," *triedness*, the excellence which results from being tried and standing the test. The tried and proved condition into which the believer is thus placed, in its turn, worketh "hope"; and thus tribulation, so far from disturbing his assurance of final salvation, only serves to confirm it.

That we have caught the Apostle's idea of glorying in our tribulation is attested by two considerations. The first, and main, consideration, is the fact that he is meeting a difficulty that is supposed to arise in the mind of the believer out of the coming of tribulation—the difficulty, namely, as to whether tribulation may not come in punishment for sins, and whether, therefore, the divine favor of justification through faith will hold for the future world. That being the difficulty which he is intending to meet, as a matter of course, that is the difficulty which he actually meets. The question, therefore, is not whether we shall desire and seek tribulations, but it is a question as to how we shall regard them when they have come upon us. His answer to that question is that we should glory in them rather than allow ourselves to be disturbed by them with regard to our final salvation. We should glory in them because they may do us a real service.

The other consideration which goes to show that we have caught the Apostle's idea is that he really says that we glory in "our tribulations"—literally, "the tribulations." That is to say, the tribulations that are *ours* because they have fallen to our lot. It is not that we are to desire tribulations in general, but are to glory in *our* tribulations, those tribulations which a wise Father has sent upon us.

When he says we glory, instead of saying we ought to glory, in these tribulations, he means, of course, that such is the ideal way of treating them. It is the way they are treated by the believer who understands his privilege in the matter and lives accordingly. That a great many believers fail thus to deal with tribulation is sadly true. But that is not because it is beyond their reach to do otherwise. The ideal way is to glory, while we suffer. It is not that we are not to suffer; for tribulation necessarily carries suffering with it. When there is no suffering, there is no tribulation. The man who can get into a glee—call it religious ecstasy, if you will—the man who can get into a glee over what would naturally be regarded as a calamity is not in tribulation, and is not adding anything to his stature as a Christian by his glee. When, however, he can glory while he suffers, he is coming up to this Pauline delineation of the ideal believer.

The third of the propositions covering the Apostle's treatment of the phase of his subject handled in 5: 1-11 is: the believer's assurance of final salvation has its enduring basis in God's love. "Hope putteth not to shame, because the love of God hath been shed abroad

in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given unto us."

This divine love has been made to appear to the believer under the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit. Thus the love of God has been "shed abroad," poured out, in his heart.

That love moved for our salvation while we were sinners. It would be regarded as the very highest exhibition of love in a man to die for a righteous fellow man, for one who had done him no injustice, whose character was one of integrity; and it would be only a little lower exhibition of love if the one on whose behalf death was encountered should be recognized as "the good man," the man whose life was not only free from injustice, but besides was full of kindness. The love of God, however, far transcended anything of the sort supposed, and moved Christ to die for us while we were positively obnoxious on account of sin.

Such love cannot but furnish an immovable ground for the believer's assurance of final salvation. A love which justified us, blotting out all our past sins, when, on account of those sins, we must have been obnoxious to the righteous God, and when the death of Christ was necessary to make justification possible in the divine economy—such love can surely be trusted for our final salvation, now that we are no longer in the position which rendered us obnoxious, but, being justified, on account of our standing in the righteousness of Christ, are really objects of divine satisfaction, and since our final salvation does not require any further sacrifice like that of the death of Christ, but is to be

accomplished through his life. "If, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life."

Paul is not satisfied with showing that the love of God, as manifested in justification, assures the believer of escape from wrath in the great Day of wrath and revelation of God's righteous judgment. He closes this section with a shout. He shows the justified believer entering heaven in triumph. It is not a salvation that consists in a bare escape from wrath and perdition; but it is a triumphal entry into heavenly glory. The believer, according to this vision of his future, is not to enter heaven by a side door; he is not to make out, by the hardest, just to get in. Nay, but he is to have "an entrance ministered unto him abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Chapter XII

UNIVERSAL PHASE OF THE METHOD

5: 12-21

This passage is the hardest in the Epistle. To interpreters it has been the *pons asinorum* and the Gordian knot. It is difficult to discern the Apostle's thought with precision, and to trace his argument with confidence. Let us see what we may be able to do with it.

The Apostle is bringing to a close this part of his Epistle on the gracious method of salvation. He has shown the relation of that method to Jewish glorying and to Jewish exclusivism, and to the integrity of the Law, and has tested it by the justification of Abraham and by its assurance for the future life of glory. He now comes to show that in its destination it is universal.

The passage involves two great facts, a relation, a parallel, and an argument. It is hoped that the following analysis may help to mark the way along which the mighty mind of the giant Apostle moved. In verse twelve there is a statement of one side of a parallel; namely, "That through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned." In verses thirteen and fourteen there is proof of the relation set up in verse twelve, between the sin of one man and the death of all. In verse fifteen we have the other side of the Parallel started in verse twelve with the declaration of the

superiority of grace over sin; and, in verses sixteen and seventeen, we have proof of that superiority. In verse eighteen there is a resumption and completion of the parallel begun in verse twelve, with reduplication in verse nineteen. Verses twenty and twenty-one show that, through the Law, sin was developed or brought into clear light; and that where sin abounded grace did much more abound.

The Apostle is here responsible for the statement of two facts: (1) death came into the human world through sin, as the result of the offense of Adam; (2) in Adam (the fountain of human life, the all of humanity then) all men, the whole race, sinned—sin as a power took hold of the race—the race passed under the dominion of sin.

What, now, is the relation between these two facts, sin and death, existing in universal extent among men—the relation as indicated by the manner in which they are brought together in the two foregoing propositions? (1) Is it that death has passed through upon all as a natural heritage simply? (2) or is it that death has passed through upon all by virtue of a divine judgment simply? (3) or is it that there was a divine judgment upon sin, and sin, carrying with it this judgment, has passed through upon all by the gate of natural descent?

The third is probably the correct view. The first excludes all idea of death as being in any way a judgment upon the descendants of Adam, while Paul surely seems to have thought that it is, in some sense, a judgment. (See verse sixteen, the *judgment* of one unto *condemnation*—*krima* and *katakrima*.) The second excludes the idea of natural heritage and makes death

a penalty inflicted upon the descendants of Adam for an offense the guilt of which could not attach to them—a view which is repugnant to what we have learned from the divine revelation of God's justice and which is not demanded by Paul's language or argument.

The only objection to regarding the third as the correct view must be found in the question as to whether it properly interprets "all sinned" (*pantes hemarton*). In so far as "sinned" (*hemarton*) is thus made to set forth a *virtual, potential, collective*, sinning, the view is amply supported by 2 Corinthians 5:14: "One died for all, therefore all died"—a virtual dying.

As the judgment of God unto death has passed upon all on account of the sin of Adam and apart from any personal demerit; so the judgment of God unto justification has passed upon all on account of the righteousness of Christ, and apart from any personal merit. Such is the great parallel begun by the Apostle in verse twelve, and after interruption, for proof in verse thirteen, is resumed in verse eighteen and reinforced in verse nineteen.

We are now prepared perhaps for the argument as a whole in this great and difficult passage.

1. Since we are justified by the gracious method hitherto set forth, there may, therefore, be discovered a parallel between death in Adam and justification in Christ.

2. The fact of death is taken as the basis of the proof. Death, universally existing among men, is referred to the sin of Adam, and is justified as a judgment of God by the fact that all sinned (*eph ho pantes*

hemarton, verse 12). That death universally existing is a divine judgment is shown by reference to its reign from Adam to Moses, when it could not have been incurred by such transgression as Adam's—the great world of humanity during that time, having no positive command like that given to Adam, could not sin after the “likeness of Adam's transgression.”

3. Two *a fortiori* considerations on the Christ side of the parallel:

a. If through the offense of the One his posterity died, more surely will the grace of God and his giving in the grace, which is of the One, Christ Jesus, make provision for that posterity—“not as the offense so also is the free gift” (*charisma*). The latter is more powerful than the former. His grace, rather than his severity, will prevail.

b. If sin through one sinning could cause death to reign as king over an unborn posterity, more surely will grace, through Christ operating in the case of as many of that posterity as individually receive the grace, make them kings in life—kings whose kingship shall consist in the possession of life (verses 16, 17).

In verse eighteen, resuming the parallel begun at verse twelve but broken off at verse thirteen, Paul states the parallel in a form determined by the argument in the digression. “So, then,” he says, “as through one offense, the judgment of God came upon all men unto condemnation; so also the free gift (*charisma*) of God came through one righteous Man (Jesus Christ) upon all unto justification that leads to life.”

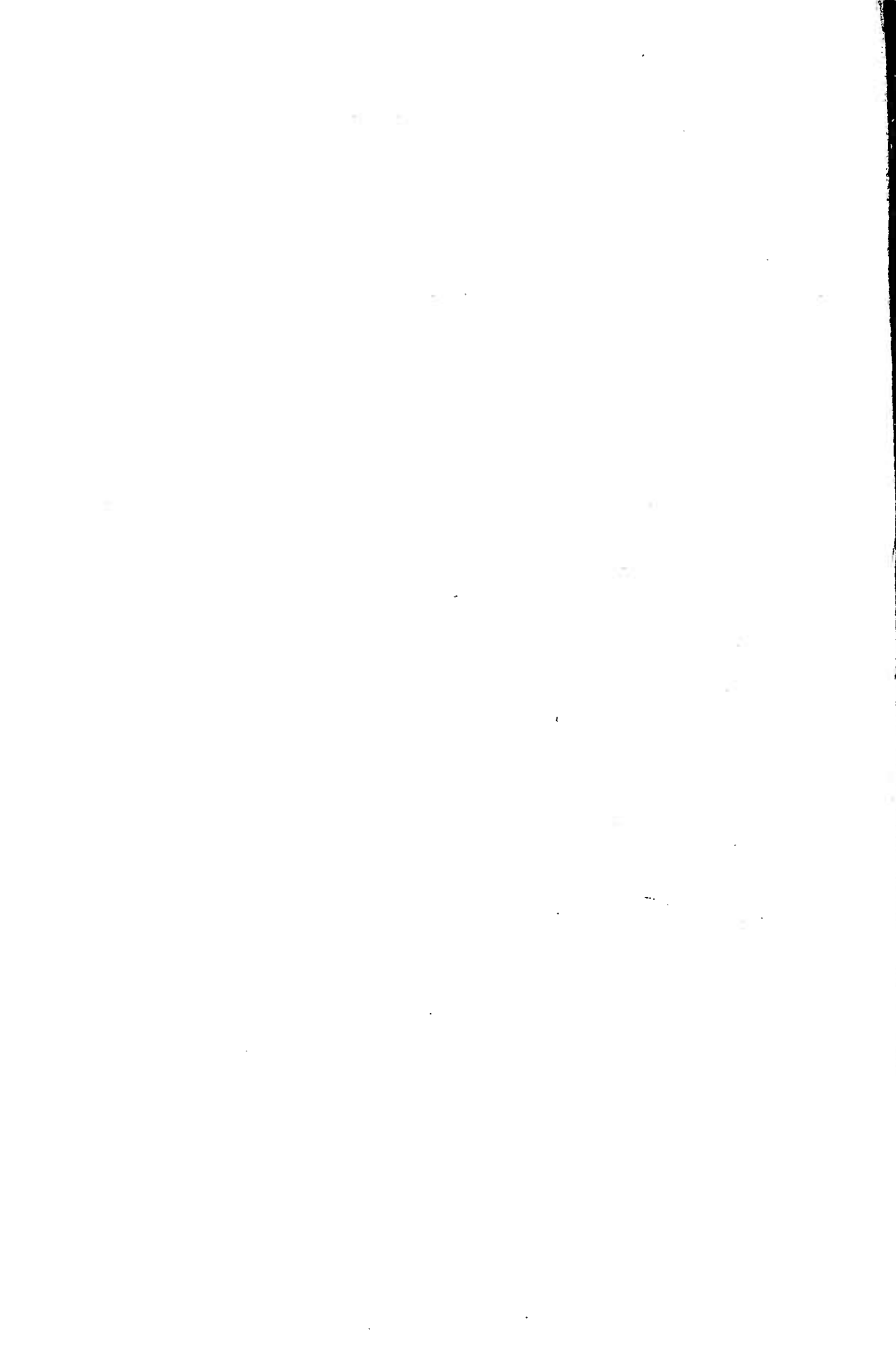
This is the *universalism* of Paul's gospel. The *charisma* was intended for all—universal in its inten-

tion or destination. The sentence of justification was pronounced for all *provisionally*. This is an echo of his "unto all" (*eis pantas*) of 3:22.

The Apostle felt that the doctrine of justification resting upon "one act of righteousness," or the obedience of One, needed reenforcement. How could that be? is the question that might arise, and in verse nineteen the answer is given: "For just as through the disobedience of one man, on his side, the multitude of his posterity were put in the position of sinners; so also through the obedience of One, on the other side, the multitude of his people (as they become his) will be put in the position of righteous persons.

This last is the *individualism* of Paul's Gospel—an echo of "them that believe" (*tous pisteuontas*) of 3:22.

When the Apostle proposed, in verse nineteen, to justify the doctrine of the latter part of verse eighteen, he evidently had an eye on the Law. Hence, in verses twenty and twenty-one, he brings this passage and this part of his Epistle to a close with adverting to the relation between the two great dispensations of Law and Grace. The Law "came in beside," for the purpose of developing sin—not of increasing it, indeed, but of bringing it out and showing what it was. But no matter how prevalent and how heinous sin was thus shown to be, grace overtopped—where sin abounded grace more abounded.



PART IV

DOES THIS METHOD PROVIDE FOR
HOLY LIVING?

6: 1—8: 39



Chapter XIII

CONTINUE IN SIN?

6: 1-14

So far we have been studying justification. The next three chapters of the Epistle are devoted to sanctification.

In chapter 1: 16, 17, Paul said that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes, and that the just shall live by faith. You will observe that he puts "salvation" and "life" together upon a plane of equality. According to his view, to be saved means to live, and to live means to be saved—only as a man is being saved is he really living in any spiritual sense. So, then, Paul's idea of spiritual life comprehends something more than a sentence of justification. "By faith in the expiatory sacrifice of Christ, the believer has obtained a sentence of justification in virtue of which he stands reconciled to God." But that is not enough. "To live, to be saved, is not merely to regain peace with God through justification; but it is also to dwell in the light of his holiness, and to act in permanent communion with him. In the cure of the soul, pardon is only the crisis of convalescence—the restoration to health is sanctification." Justification frees us from the guilt of sin; sanctification frees us from the power of sin. Justification is that divine sentence which declares the believer, though a sinner,

acquitted before the tribunal of God, in view of the righteousness of Christ; sanctification is that process by which the believer, a justified sinner, becomes personally holy—that process by which the believer passes from the position in which he is regarded and treated by the Lord as holy for Christ's sake, to the condition in which he is actually holy.

What, now, is the relation between justification and sanctification? Some suppose that justification is the whole of salvation, and that sanctification is the condition of holding on to salvation. "Apply yourself to the pursuit of holiness, or you will again fall into condemnation," they would say.

Others say that sanctification is the cause, or ground, of justification. They hold that Paul means to say: "If faith justifies you, as I have just shown, it is because, in fact, by the mystical and personal union which faith establishes between Christ and us, it alone has the power to sanctify us." On this view the gift of pardon flows from that of holiness, instead of holiness flowing from pardon; and that is putting the cart before the horse. Paul did not mean to say anything like that. He knew there could be no progress under such an arrangement. He knew that we need to be set free from ourselves, and not thrown back upon ourselves. If we had to rest the assurance of our justification, little or much, upon our own sanctification, our hearts could never be penetrated with that filial confidence and peace necessary to progress in the divine likeness. There must first be rest in God, peace through justification; then may come work with him, in his fellowship-sanctification.

Still others say that sanctification follows as a duty from justification. "You are justified freely," they say, "and now, moved by gratitude, you ought to renounce evil, and pursue holiness." There is no doubt an element of truth in that view, but it is not the whole truth or the fundamental truth in the case—it is not the ground principle that connects these two great facts of justification and sanctification. According to Paul, the connection is closer.

What is the connection? Let us look carefully. What is it?

Justification and sanctification are different products, so to speak, of the same causes operating under different conditions. What are the causes operating? They are two; namely, the holiness of Christ and the faith of the individual. These are the causes operating; and they remain essentially the same. What are the different conditions under which they operate to produce these two different effects? In one condition there is an unjustified soul; and, in the other condition, there is a justified soul. That is the difference. In both cases there is above the holiness of the crucified and risen Christ, and below there is the faith of a human soul. The faith of the guilty and condemned soul appropriates the holiness of the crucified and risen Christ; and at once that guilty soul becomes before God a justified soul. The faith of the justified soul appropriates the holiness of the crucified and risen Christ; and it becomes a sanctified soul.

From the very nature of the case, justification is instantaneous, while sanctification is gradual. I say "from the nature of the case." What is the nature of

the case? Why, justification is declared, while sanctification is acquired. As soon as the sinner sincerely says to the Lord: "I accept for myself the holiness of Christ—I am a sinner, without holiness of my own, and I accept his holiness," the Lord reckons that to the sinner as holiness, and declares him just. The sinner in that moment is justified. But he is not really holy. The "old man" is not destroyed. He is still there with his lusts. He is down, but he soon begins to rise. That justified soul will become really holy only as the "old man" with his lusts is subdued and destroyed. Will his destruction be accomplished in an instant? It might be answered that God can destroy that "old man" in an instant, just as easily as he could pronounce a sentence of justification in an instant, and hence that sanctification, like justification, might be instantaneous. But that answer would not do, because it would disregard the whole human side of this matter of salvation, and would make it purely the result of an arbitrary divine will. God requires a certain co-operation of those who are saved. He does not save them whether or not, without any co-operation on their part. For justification the co-operation he requires is that we sincerely accept the holiness of Christ for ourselves, confessing our own utter unworthiness. That done, he declares us justified. For sanctification, on the other hand, the co-operation he requires is that we fight the "old man" with his lusts. He does not with divine power destroy that "old man" at one stroke and in a moment. He creates, indeed, a "new man"; and he requires that the "new man" shall contend for the mastery and the destruction of the old. The "new man" is

to get constant acquisitions of strength for the combat, through the channel of faith—the believer is to open his heart and allow the holy life of the living Christ to fill it.

To put the matter in a nutshell, we may say that “justification is the strait gate through which we enter the narrow way to sanctification which leads to glory.”

Paul knew that an objection might be easily raised upon moral grounds to his doctrine of justification by grace through faith. In spite of the careful and emphatic way in which he guarded it, men have perverted it and made it minister to immorality. All along there have been some who said: “According to Paul’s teaching we are saved, not by works, but by faith; therefore, having faith, we are saved and may live as we please.”

The whole scheme of justification by grace through faith, he well knew, was liable to that perversion, and especially so was an expression which he used in closing his exposition of the doctrine. It was the expression in 5:20: “Where sin abounded grace did much more abound.”

It was in view of the easy perversion of his language that the Apostle began the sixth chapter of the Epistle with the question: “What, then, shall we say? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” and with the emphatic denial: “God forbid!”

“That cannot be!” he would say—“Look, look, reader! Consider what I have taught! What did your faith upon which you claimed justification mean? Did it not mean that you accepted the righteousness of Christ, a righteousness not available for your justifi-

cation till all was finished on the cross? In accepting him did you not accept his death? Did you not by faith die with him? And when you died with him, did you not die to sin? Was there not in your soul an unconditional renunciation of sin? And now, if you died to sin, how can you live any longer in it?" As a dead man does not return to his old occupations, so a Christian is not expected to turn again to his old life of sin; for the Christian in respect of his old life of sin died when he accepted the death of Christ—"The sentence of death with which God visited the sin of the world was reproduced in his conscience. The instant he applied the expiation to himself, it became in him the sentence of death on his own sin. He could not appropriate Christ to himself as dead for his sin, without finding himself dead to sin through this death undergone for him." It was under an impression of that sort that a believing Bechuana exclaimed: "The Cross of Christ condemns me to be holy!"

"Why," says the Apostle, "your baptism sets forth the true view. If you understand the meaning of your baptism, you could never make this mistake of supposing that the doctrine of grace abounding in justification by faith gives license to continue in sin. In that baptism you were buried. Now, when do we bury people? It is when they are dead. Very well; you were buried in baptism because in your profession of faith you really professed to have died; and sin was the thing to which you died. Your burial in baptism was intended, therefore, to declare that you had died to sin. And there was another side to your baptism. You were buried to be raised again. As your burial

meant that you had died to sin, so your resurrection from the grave of baptism meant that you were to walk in newness of life. Christ died for sin, and was buried. When he rose again it was not to the former life in the body of flesh which he had lived among his disciples; but it was to a new, glorified life. So when you rose from your tomb in the baptismal water your resurrection meant that you were henceforth to live, not the old life of sin, but a new life of holiness. You have become identified with Christ in his death and in his life. Dead to sin, alive to God, is your true position."

Having thus shown what is the believer's true position, the Apostle calls upon him (verses twelve and thirteen) not to allow this new position to be a mere matter of theory, but to make it his real life. "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body." That exhortation assumes that sin is still there. The monster wants to hold dominion. What the believer is to do is to see that sin is not allowed to reign. Here is where human co-operation with the divine agency comes in. Faith is the human hand that is to co-operate. Paul does not say: Resist sin; fight it with all your might. He says that, but more; and it is the "more" that makes the other worth anything. Resist sin; yield to God! That is the prescription!

Chapter XIV

LESS CAREFUL?

6: 15-23

In 5: 20, Paul had said that where sin abounded grace did much more abound. That remark led to his raising the question in 6: 1, as to whether we "shall continue in sin that grace may abound." He knew very well that men would say that if his doctrine of justification by faith was true they might exercise faith, be justified, and continue in their old life of sin. To such reasoning as that he opposed the statement that faith in Christ involves death to sin and newness of life with Christ. The development of that idea he closed with the remark in 6: 14, "Ye are not under law but under grace."

What was the thought that would be started in the mind that was looking for an objection to the doctrine of justification by faith, or looking for an excuse to sin? Manifestly this: If I am not under law but under grace, I can at least be less careful with regard to avoiding sin; I need not have so great a horror of yielding to sin in some forms or at some times; I may count on grace to excuse such lapses. Paul knew the human heart well; and he would not proceed without anticipating this objection and guarding against this abuse of his great doctrine. Consequently, he asks, in

6:15, "What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace?"

The question here is not whether we shall continue in sin, or sin habitually, but whether we shall sin at all. The first of these questions the Apostle has already answered. That was the question started at 6:1, and answered in the succeeding thirteen verses of the chapter. The question there was whether the man who has been justified by faith may not go right on in his old life of sin without any change. Here the question is whether he may not have license to lapse into sin now and then, here and there. The question already treated contemplated no change at all in the life of the believer; the question which is now under treatment contemplates a change, indeed, but also excusable lapses into sin.

To this new question the Apostle offers as emphatic a negative answer as to the previous one. His answer is in exactly the same language. "By no means! Never! God forbid!" Any of those negative exclamations of ours would fitly represent his thought.

His answer to the question standing at the head of the chapter he sustained by an argument based on the figure of Death. In the case now before us he sustains his answer by an argument based on another figure. This time it is Service.

The appeal is to the well-known relation between master and servant. Every man is at liberty to choose his master. The field of choice is narrowed down to two possible masters. They may be spoken of as God and Mammon; as God and Satan; as God and Self; or as Righteousness and Sin.

Whenever a man chooses his master, he, by that choice, becomes the slave of the master chosen. According to his choice, service loyal and exclusive is due and must be given to his master. As Jesus himself, before Paul, had said: "No man can serve two masters." There must be paramount authority somewhere. Paramount authority for any man is lodged in that man's chosen master. He may try to serve two masters in order to get the rewards of both. But that is impossible. For a while the demands of the two may not conflict. Then he may seem to be able to have two masters. But when their demands conflict, as they surely will sometimes, then he can yield to only one; and the one to whom he yields is his real master.

Paul says to the Romans: "Thanks be unto God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye become obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and, being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness."

They had made a new choice of masters. That was involved in their faith. When they took refuge from the divine wrath, under the protecting, shielding, sheltering righteousness of Christ, they gave their allegiance to righteousness as their master. That is just another way of saying that when the righteousness of Christ offered to them was accepted by them, and was credited to them, in lieu of personal righteousness of their own, that perfect righteousness of Christ became the ideal which they engaged to strive after in their own lives.

Yes, their justifying faith involved a change of masters. They had chosen to discard the dominion of sin,

and to put in the place of that the dominion of righteousness. Whereas they had previously yielded obedience to the demand of sin, they now engaged to yield to the demands of righteousness.

Here, then, were two facts. The first was drawn from common experience. It was something which the Romans would readily recognize. For every man there must be some paramount authority, some master whose demands would be honored above all others. There could not be two such masters, but only one. The other fact was a doctrinal one, drawn from what was implied in the great doctrine of justification by faith. It was the fact that justifying faith necessarily carries along with it a change of allegiance, a discarding of sin as master and choosing of righteousness for that position.

From these two facts the conclusion was inevitable that the believer is not at liberty to be less careful about lapsing into sin because he is not under law but under grace. It is true that he is not justified upon the ground of any good works, any deeds of law, but purely upon the ground of faith. It is true that his justification is a matter of God's grace, and not of his own merit. But, while that is all true, it is at the same time true that the very faith through which he is justified freely itself involves a choice on his part which binds him to yield to the demands of righteousness and so shuts him off from license to lapse into this or that sin, depending upon God's grace to be lenient and to excuse him.

The Apostle exhorts the Roman Christians to be as true to their new Master as they had been to the old.

They had tried sin as a master. They had served him well. They could only be ashamed of that service.

Certainly no good to them had come out of it. The case is different under the new master. There is surely nothing to be ashamed of. The fruit of such service is growth in holiness—"Ye have your fruit unto sanctification," is the way he expresses it.

The final end of the service in the two cases is also as different as life and death. The end of the service of righteousness is "everlasting life," while the end of the service of sin is "death." Death is the "wages" with which sin pays its servants.

Men are often brought, even in this life, to realize how faithfully sin pays the wages of its servants. A dying youth was reported to have said: "Could I have realized that by my sin I should shorten my life from seventy to twenty years, I should have broken from it, had it been twice as enticing. And, not only have I shortened my life so, but I have squandered what I had of it." Looking back over a life of sin, Byron, in his last days, perhaps as the last of his work, wrote these lines:

"My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers, the fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is lifted at its blaze,
A funeral pile!"

Over against those gloomy words of despair put this pæan of the Christian soldier, Paul, as he ap-

proached the end: "I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day!"

One of the most common temptations to Christians is dealt with by the Apostle in this section of his great Epistle. Said one of God's noblemen: "There is a subtle poison which insinuates itself into the heart even of the best Christian; it is the temptation to say, Let us sin, not that grace may abound, but because grace does abound." Even a Christian is so apt to feel that because he is under grace he may yield to this or that enticement, especially so, if he regards the sin to which he is enticed as a small one. But Paul rules out any such feeling as that. A slight fracture on one facet of a magnificent ruby lost it a place among the crown jewels of one of the world's great royal families. A tiny red line on a block of Parian marble ruled it out from under the chisel of one of the world's greatest artists for a statue of one of the world's most powerful men. The slightest scratch on the glass spoiled many a lense that otherwise would have gone into gigantic telescopes. A tiny leak in the hull of a ship has spoiled the powder magazine and lost a victory.

Christianity is a holy thing. The righteousness to which we have given our allegiance will permit no compromise.

Chapter XV

A NEW FORCE

7: 1-6

Paul had finished the exposition of his great doctrine of justification by grace through faith at the close of the fifth chapter of the Epistle. With the opening of the sixth chapter he took up certain objections, or perversions, to which the doctrine was liable. The first of these was that, according to this doctrine, men might continue in sin without any change of life as the result of their religion. Men might say: "According to your doctrine of justification we may believe and be justified, and then go right on in our same old life without any change whatever. Your doctrine does not provide for morality, but, on the contrary, encourages a course of sin."

To that the Apostle replies with the thought that the Christian dies with Christ, that this dying with Christ is implied in faith; and that the Christian, having died to the whole life of sin, will as a matter of course not continue therein. His doctrine of justification by faith, therefore, provides for a change from the old life of sin by carrying in the very nature of faith a death to sin (6: 1-14).

The second perversion anticipated and met by the Apostle is that, since the God who justifies the sinner upon the ground of faith is a gracious God, and puts

the justified sinner under grace instead of the Law, the Christian need not be careful to avoid lapsing into particular sins; that, while he is expected, indeed, to change the general course of his life, he may yet depend upon the kindness of a God of grace readily to excuse this or that sin to which the heart is specially inclined; and that, therefore, he need not be specially watchful, nor specially persistent in resisting temptation.

To that Paul replies with the doctrine that when the sinner passed by faith under this dispensation of grace, he only changed masters. He gave up his allegiance to sin and transferred it to righteousness; that, while sin had hitherto been his master, he put righteousness in that position when he exercised the faith upon which justification was granted; that this change of masters was involved in that faith; that the Christian really engaged to meet the demands of righteousness as he had hitherto met the demands of sin (6: 15-23).

To disposing of those two possible perversions, then, the Apostle devoted the sixth chapter of the Epistle; and with the opening of the seventh chapter he takes up another view of the relation of his doctrine of justification by faith to the work of sanctification. He had no thought of preaching a gospel that did not provide for morality. He would not set forth a scheme of salvation that provided only for deliverance from the guilt of sin. His idea of salvation was too broad for that. There must be also a cure of the soul—a deliverance from the disease of sin, from its power, its dominion, the love of it.

In the view which he now takes up he introduces a

new force. He carries us up to the idea of a spiritual union with Christ. Hitherto he has been speaking of faith as implying: (1) a death to sin and a consequent newness of life; (2) a change of masters, the dominion of sin having been discarded for that of righteousness. Those thoughts were a complete answer to any who would pervert his gospel in such a way as to make it minister to sin. To those who might say that his gospel of justification by grace through faith gave full license to go on in their old course, his answer was: When you profess faith you profess to be dead to sin; and your profession, therefore, binds you to leave sin behind you, to change your course. To those who might say that his gospel of grace gave them license to be less careful about yielding to temptation, his answer was: When you profess faith you really profess to have exchanged sin as a master for righteousness; and your profession binds you to serve righteousness as faithfully as you have been serving sin.

These answers, let it be repeated, were a complete guard to his gospel against those anticipated perversions. But Paul felt that something more was necessary. He had, so far, only guarded his great doctrine against the evil of being made a minister to sin. He must now show that it carried in its bosom the force necessary to positive growth in holiness; that it not only did not minister to sin, but that it did minister to holiness. The seventh and eighth chapters of the Epistle are devoted to the development of that idea.

The new force which he introduces here in the beginning of the seventh chapter, as implied in faith and as sufficient to sanctify the Christian, is spiritual union

with Christ. He presents this union under the figure of the marriage relation. We were once joined to the Law; by faith we have been united to Christ. According to his figure there has occurred a change in the marriage relation that puts Christ in the place hitherto occupied by the Law.

This change has not been illegally made. It is entirely in accordance with the very Law which has been displaced by Christ. Under that Law, death dissolves the marriage bond. Both the one who lives and the one who dies are absolved. In the case which the Apostle is treating the Christian occupies the place of the wife under the figure. As when a husband dies, the wife by his death becomes dead *as his wife* and is loosed from the bond and may be joined to another; so here the Christian by faith, having died, is loosed from the Law and is free to be joined to another—is, indeed, in that death joined to Another, even Jesus Christ.

It must be observed that Paul does not say that the Law is dead. It might have been expected that he was intending to say something of that sort. His figure seemed to require it. If he should work it out consistently, one would think that just there he would land. But he did not land there. He had no idea of making that landing. In his figure, mind you, the wife represents the justified soul. Very well; he says that the woman who has a husband is bound to him while he lives; but, if he dies, she is discharged from her bond to him. Now, it might be expected that when he came to apply the figure he would say that the soul was bound to the Law, as the wife to her husband, as long

as the Law lived, or remained in force; but that when the Law should die, that is to say, be abrogated by the death of Christ appropriated by the soul, then the soul would be loosed from its bond to the Law. But, no; he did not work it out that way. He says nothing about the death of the Law-spouse. It is the other member of the family that dies; namely, the sinful soul. By thus attributing to the wife (the sinful soul) a virtual, constructive death, he makes his figure fit and illustrate the case before him, which is to show that the justified soul in justifying faith dies to the Law, and so is loosed from the Law and is legitimately joined to Christ.

Pains have been taken to expound what may seem to be so comparatively unimportant a matter as this figure, in order to emphasize the fact that Paul is careful not to say that faith annuls the Law. Paul's master, Christ, himself had said that he came not to destroy the Law but to fulfil it. Under the Christian dispensation the Law is as really a revelation of God's will as it ever was, and is, therefore, just as really as ever a correct and binding standard of morals. As a method of justification and sanctification, however, it is set aside as never having been intended for more than a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ. But as a standard of morality it is as binding as ever.

The change implied in this spiritual union with Christ is a change of inestimable advantage to the soul. While it has been made without any injustice to the Law, without any violation of Law, while the change from the Law as a spouse to Christ as a spouse has been made without any illegality, it has, at the same

time, been done with infinite advantage to the soul making the change. This advantage comes of the fact that the change introduces a new and spiritual force which assures the soul's sanctification.

The Law was external. It was only a bar to those passions of the soul that make out in evil courses; and, as it could only oppose those passions, and not abate them, it really excited them and gave them added force and fury. The union of the soul with the Law, therefore, could not sanctify.

The union with Christ, on the other hand, introduces a spiritual power into the soul—a power which modifies and abates, as well as restrains, the passions of the soul. A young man is led into bad ways. He sees his error. He says: I will do better; this kind of thing is not good for me. He has a hard time struggling against his old ways. He makes no progress. In despair he comes under the influence of a mighty affection for a pure and noble woman. She reciprocates his love. He is too honest to accept her love without telling her how unworthy he is. She is willing to undertake to lead him out of his temptations. Now he does not think so much about whether his old ways are best for him or not. Now it is the power of a new affection. So it is with the soul in its relation to the Law and to Christ. The Law only intensifies the wrong desires. But when the vision of Christ dawns on the soul, when the Spirit of God says, "Thou art his and he is thine," when that soul can say, "The life I now live I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me"—when it comes under the influence of this new spiritual power, its sanctification is assured.

Chapter XVI

INABILITY OF THE LAW

7: 7-21

So far in his discussion of the provision for sanctification in his gospel of justification by grace through faith, the Apostle has represented the believer as dead to sin and dead to the Law.

Now, if in becoming a Christian one dies to sin and also to the Law, is not the Law put in very bad company? An objector to this gospel might say: Brother Paul, you have come perilously near to identifying the Law with sin; your doctrine makes the Christian die to sin, to be sure, but it also makes him die to the Law—does not your doctrine, then, put sin and the Law in the same category, as things evil that a man must get rid of when he becomes a Christian? That is the thought-condition, the logical root, out of which this section of the Epistle grows. "Is the Law sin? God forbid!" Thus to the inference that his gospel identifies the Law with sin, the Apostle opposes the most emphatic denial.

It is not because sin and the Law are identical, or at all alike, that his gospel carries with it the necessity of dying to both. The reason is to be found in another direction. The man who is joined to Christ dies to sin because sin is evil; he dies to the Law because the Law is unable, not only to justify, as shown in a previous part of the Epistle (3: 9-20), but unable also to

sanctify. That the Law is unable to sanctify is fully shown in our section (7:7-25).

Through the Law came *knowledge* of sin. "I had not known sin, except through the law."

We are not to understand Paul to mean that there can be no knowledge whatever of sin where the Mosaic Law is unknown. In 2:14, 15, he has himself forbidden us to understand him in that way. There he said: "When Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are a law unto themselves, in that they shew the word of the law written in their hearts, their consciences bearing witness therewith, accusing or else excusing them." There is, apart from any written law, some knowledge of sin. God has not left holiness without a witness in the soul of man. There is everywhere a conscience of sin, a sense of guilt. But such knowledge of sin is dim and vague as compared with that which comes through the Law that was given to Israel. The Apostle, therefore, means that he did not know sin as to its extent and enormity, until it was revealed to him through God's Law. He knew of the existence of sin, but did not understand its real character. "For example," he would say, "I did not know that to covet is sin, until the Law said, 'Thou shalt not covet.'" He knew that there was sin in the world, but did not know that coveting was sin.

So far, the Law seemed to be in a fair way to sanctify. A good start towards a cure has been made, surely, when the character of the disease has been discovered. That a diagnosis of the case to be treated is made by the Law, there can be no doubt. The malady to

be uprooted is thoroughly mapped out. Its deepest root is traced to the farthest limit. But the Law can get no nearer to a cure of the disease than its perfect diagnosis. It can do nothing towards tearing up the evil, except to give us a map showing where its roots take hold.

To one who expects the Law to sanctify, this must be disappointing. Paul had suffered that disappointment; and every one who expects in his own strength to perfect his character is doomed sooner or later to a like disappointment. Imagine what it is to have a physician to tell you exactly what is the matter with you when you are sick, and to tell you at the same time that he cannot cure you. Such a physician is the Law. It tells you exactly what is the matter with you, but is utterly unable to cure you.

Again, through the Law sin is *aroused*. "Sin, finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting; for apart from the law sin is dead."

Sin may be regarded as an evil deed, or as an evil disposition, or as an evil principle or agent. It is in the last light that Paul here views it. He speaks of it as an agent that may be dead or alive, and that may take advantage of an opportunity.

What effect, now, does the Law have upon this evil agent? Does it cure him? Does it kill him? Does it cast him out? By no means. That is what is needed to be done. That is what Paul's gospel of justification through faith is held to be able to do. But that the Law cannot do. The Law only discloses the enemy in all his hideousness and immense proportions. It can

do nothing, absolutely nothing, towards vanquishing him. So far from that, it arouses him. Apart from the Law, he was in a manner dead. It was with the coming of the commandment that he revived. Then it was that, being opposed by the Law, he awoke to an unwonted activity. Thus receiving an impulse, he wrought through the commandment all manner of desire.

We should go amiss if we supposed that Paul intended to teach that sin is ever absolutely dead in relation to any man, whether with or without the Law. What he meant was that, apart from God's Law, this evil agent is comparatively inactive; or, to put the matter in another way, that he makes himself little felt in a soul into which no apprehension of God's Law has come. He is dead only in appearance. He seems to be dead, because he has no opposition. Because his death-dealing work is not felt, he is not understood to be at work at all, and passes as dead.

Witness is borne to this teaching of the Apostle by the common experience of mankind. "Stolen waters," observes the proverb, "are sweet; and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." We often wish for things we cannot get because we cannot get them. Prohibited things are often the things we most desire. Human nature is such that a prohibitory command will excite desire for the thing prohibited unless the force of the prohibition is neutralized by some other force like love or loyalty to the one who issues the prohibitory command.

A single fact from Nature may be taken to illustrate the Apostle's doctrine that, through Law, sin is aroused. "A rapid stream flows calmly on so long as it is not

checked, but foams and roars as soon as some obstacle opposes it. So does the sinful element calmly hold its course through a man as long as he does not stem it; but if he would realize the divine commandment, he begins to feel the force of the element of whose dominion he had, as yet, no suspicion" (Olshausen).

Still again, through the Law sin *works death*. "I was alive apart from the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died; and the commandment, which was unto life, this I found to be unto death; for sin, finding occasion through the commandment, beguiled me and through it slew me."

Paul says that there had been a time when he was alive apart from the Law. That statement embraces two facts. One of these is that there was a time in his experience when he was apart from the Law; and the other fact is that he was then alive.

To what period in his experience does he refer when he says he was apart from the Law? He was reared after the strictest manner of the Jewish religion. Was there, then, any time after he awoke to consciousness from infancy when he was entirely apart from the Law? Did he not have some knowledge of the Law as soon as he was old enough to learn it? We are obliged to hold that he did. It hardly seems to be in harmony with his purpose in the argument here to refer at this point to the period of his unintelligent infancy. We must, therefore, look to some later time in his life as meeting the condition he describes. At what period after infancy could he have been apart from the Law? There was certainly no such period at which he was apart

from the Law in the sense that he was ignorant of it. This being apart from the Law of which he speaks, we must therefore understand in some other way. It certainly does not mean ignorance of the Law of God. He was "apart from the law"—what does he mean? This: That he was apart from the Law, not intellectually, but spiritually. As yet, his soul stood apart from the Law. He had intellectual contact with it, but no spiritual contact. The Law had entered into his mind as an object of intellectual apprehension, but had not entered into his life as a spiritual force.

Just at what time the Law did enter into his life as a spiritual force, we have no means of determining. It was, however, at some point between infancy and his conversion. Until it did thus enter his life, he was in that condition which he describes as "apart from the law."

What, now, about that other fact contained in the Apostle's statement? He says that during the period when he was "apart from the law," he was "alive." What idea of life is it that he here has in mind? It is not necessary to say that he is not thinking of physical life. The thought, as a matter of course, is of spiritual life. But does he mean to say that he was spiritually alive while he was "apart from the law"? That he was alive in the sense that he was in a saved condition, or free from sin? It is quite impossible to understand Paul as teaching any such doctrine as that. He has too plainly taught the condemnation and lost condition of all who are out of Christ, to permit us to understand him here to say that there was a time in his life when,

though yet out of Christ, he was in a saved condition because the Law had not come into his heart as a spiritual force to condemn.

What he does mean is this: Until the Law came to his heart in such a way as to convict and condemn, he supposed himself to be spiritually alive.

As he had been "alive" "apart from the law," so, he says, when the commandment came, sin revived and he died—sin, finding occasion through the commandment, beguiled him and through it slew him. Here is death; and it is death wrought by sin through the Law. When the Law came with convicting and condemning power, he died. What sort of death was it? How much was involved in it? It is the antithesis of the life he had lost. As that life was the absence of the sense of condemnation, so the death of which he here speaks is the realization of condemnation. He represents this death as wrought by sin through the Law. There is in his presentation of the matter the idea of deception. Allusion seems to be made to the account in Genesis of the first temptation, where Satan beguiled Eve, taking advantage of the prohibitory command there given, to excite in her a desire for the thing prohibited, and so to bring death upon her. The Law had come with tremendous force into Saul's heart; thus coming it had aroused the evil tendencies in his nature; and so it had shown him what a guilty creature he must be in God's sight. Coming thus under a sense of guilt, he had been brought to this death of condemnation by his enemy sin operating upon his evil nature through the Law.

The experience of life and death which Paul here portrays is a common one among men. There is first

the period of comparative security, not safety; for no man out of Christ is safe. Security is a different thing. Security is only a feeling of safety. There are many who have that feeling to some extent. They are those who have not been awakened to their danger. They are passing through this period of security. They are comparatively without care as to their spiritual condition; and to be without care is the meaning of "security." First, then, comes this period of security. Then it is that, like Saul, when "apart from the law," they are "alive"—they suppose themselves to be under no condemnation of eternal death. After a time there comes an awakening to some of those who have been living in security. And, as Saul was "slain through the law," as his coming to a vivid consciousness of condemnation and of the inability of the Law to deliver him was felt by him to be death; so now, a Saviour having been provided and the gospel offer being declared, the convicted, burdened, lost sinner who, in his darkness and guilt, cannot find the way of life and who cries out in anguish, it may be for days or weeks or months, "What shall I do to be saved?" experiences something of the misery of the lost, something of the pains of eternal death.

Now, this use which sin makes of the Law in working death does not cast odium upon the Law. It is not the Law, which is always good, that has wrought death; but sin has done that, and sin in using so holy and just and good an instrument as the Law to effect a result so evil shows sin to be what it really is—sinful beyond measure. This masterpiece of perversity of which sin has thus become guilty shows it up in its true light.

The Law, then, is spiritual; it is holy, just, good; but it cannot effect a cure of the soul; as it was seen to be unable to justify, so now it is seen to be unable to sanctify; as it could not deliver from the guilt of sin, so it cannot deliver from the dominion of sin. It cannot justify, but can only condemn. It cannot cure, but can only kill. It can oppose the current of life; but, in opposing that current, it cannot purify; it can only cause the current to foam and roar. It can reveal sin, but cannot eradicate it. It can find the enemy in his most secret lurking-places, but cannot destroy him. It can discover the true nature of the fell disease, but it brings no healing. By its divine, inexorable protest and opposition, it can stir sin to such a conflict for the preservation of its dominion in the soul that the agony of a living death can find no adequate expression short of the cry of anguish: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" but it can give no answer to that cry which it has wrung from the soul. Only the grace of God in Christ Jesus can answer that cry.

The conflict as portrayed by Paul is such that to touch it is to mar it!

Chapter XVII

FREEDOM FROM CONDEMNATION; DESTRUCTION OF SIN; TRIUMPH OVER DEATH

8: 1-11

Three propositions will practically cover the content of this section of the Epistle. They are: (1) for the man who is in Christ Jesus there is freedom from condemnation; (2) for the man who is in Christ Jesus there is destruction of sin; (3) for the man who is in Christ Jesus there is triumph over death.

"There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

It will be observed that there is here a "therefore." That word always points to an inference from something that has gone before. To what does it here point? Let us see whether we may not discover the connection of thought.

It is to be recalled that Paul stated the subject of the Epistle in the sixteenth and seventeenth verses of the first chapter. It was a divine righteousness for unrighteous men that he proposed to discuss. It was a divine righteousness for unrighteous men made available to them through faith. In other words, he there propounded his great doctrine of justification by grace through faith. He was occupied with the exposition of

that doctrine till he reached the end of the fifth chapter. Then, with the opening of the sixth chapter he began to anticipate objections to the doctrine. In the first place, it might be alleged that this doctrine would encourage men to pursue their old course of sin. If they are justified freely upon the ground of the righteousness of Christ, and entirely apart from any good deeds of their own, then they might conclude that there is no need of moral living; that they might continue in sin and so give grace an opportunity to abound. This possible perversion of his gospel Paul has met by the thought that the faith through which the justifying righteousness of Christ is made available, involves death to sin. In the second place, it might be alleged that though one should turn away from habitual sinful indulgence, he might by this doctrine of free grace be encouraged to less vigilance against lapsing into occasional sin. This possible perversion the Apostle has met with the idea that, when a man comes into the exercise of faith in Christ he passes from under the dominion of sin, and becomes subject to righteousness; and, whereas he has hitherto served sin as master, he is henceforth to serve his new master, righteousness, with equal zeal and fidelity.

Something beyond meeting these objections, however, was necessary. Paul wished to claim for his doctrine, not only that it does not encourage sin, but that it furnishes the power necessary to overcome sin—that it carries in its bosom a sanctifying force that the law does not possess. This he has brought out by representing the union between Christ and the believer under the figure of marriage. This union was effected

that the believer might "bring forth fruit unto God;" and, as that was the design of the union, so it would be the result.

This sanctifying force the Law did not have. The Law was not itself a thing of sin because it revealed sin in the heart, and rather nurtured than destroyed it; but it was certain that the Law could not sanctify. That had been abundantly proved in his own life, which he takes to be representative. The conflict set up in his life between sin and the Law could only lead him in agony to cry out: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?"

Having thus stated, expounded, and defended his great doctrine, the Apostle comes back, at the beginning of chapter eight, and states the general conclusion from the doctrine now quite fully established: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

There is *no* condemnation to the man who is in Christ. The "no" is emphatic. It is impossible that the man in Christ should be subject to condemnation on any account. That this is so has been shown in the whole preceding development of the theme; and that development is now briefly summarized in the words of the second verse of this eighth chapter: "The law of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death." The man in Christ is free from the law of sin and death; and *therefore* he is free from condemnation.

Paul has thus made his doctrine *ethical*. He has answered the legalist of his own day, and your "ethical" man of our day. As there were men in that

time who would object that this Pauline gospel dishonored the Mosaic Law, and destroyed the foundations of morality, so there are men now who say that it is a mechanical theory, wholly unethical. To say that a man who is in Christ is *therefore* absolved from condemnation, seems to them to be a sort of sheltering of a criminal. But, according to Paul, to be "in Christ" has its reciprocal relation, "Christ in you;" and it is not the old man in his sins that is freed from condemnation, but the new man, which is "Christ in you." In other words, Paul conceives that where faith is, there is a "new creation;" and it is that "new creation" which is absolved from condemnation. It is not that the old man is arbitrarily sheltered, and protected against the penalty that is due, but it is that the new man, which has been formed in the old, that divine thing, the Christ in the believer, is by its very nature free.

This is not equivalent to coming round again and basing justification upon good deeds, or personal merit. It is all by grace through faith. The Christ is offered to us, his righteousness takes the place which the Law requires to be filled by righteousness of our own, not possessed by us and impossible to be possessed. The Christ is thus offered to us. We accept him as he is graciously offered to us. That is what faith does. Faith is the receiving hand. It is on the ground of the divine work thus performed in us—for the sake of the Christ who thus enters our souls—that we are justified. The Christ having entered our souls, we can no longer be condemned. Where he is there is no condemnation. He has, once for all, suffered the condemnation due to others. He can suffer that no more. Condemnation

can nevermore rest upon him; and hence, if he is in a soul, that soul cannot be condemned. As he is forever free, so the soul in which he dwells is forever free.

“What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

Here is destruction of sin. That is a result which the Law was entirely unable to accomplish. The Law did, indeed, condemn sin in a way, but not as Christ condemned it. The Law condemned it *on paper*, if we may so speak, and could do no more. The Law discovered sin—hunted it out in its most secret lurking-places, and declared that it must be destroyed, or it would destroy its victims; but the Law could go no farther. It was in this respect like those men who propose plans, but cannot execute them. This failure was due to the conditions amid which the Law must work—“it was weak through the flesh.” The Law was not adapted to the work of *eradicating* sin. The obstacles of “the flesh” were too great. Its office was to *reveal* sin—to show its enormity and its deep hold upon human nature. It was an external thing, and therefore could not reach the deep, internal root of sin. For that there was needed a spiritual force within, a force of the kind to match and overmatch the spiritual evil within men’s hearts. As sin has its seat and source within, so that which is to eradicate it must be within. No external rule could ever effect its destruction. The internal, spiritual force demanded is found in the indwell-

ing Christ. God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, and condemned sin in the flesh—and for what? In order that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Sin was by the Christ devoted to destruction. The divine purpose in *thus* passing judgment irreversible upon sin was that the requirements of the Law might be fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. In verse nine, the Apostle uses this language: “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.” And, right after those words come these: “If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” And, continuing, he says: “If Christ is in you the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.” From all this we clearly see what, according to Paul’s view, is necessary to bring about the fulfillment in men of the “requirement of the law,” and the accompanying destruction of sin. It is the indwelling Christ—“if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.” The spiritual condition which he describes as characterized by the indwelling Christ, he also describes as characterized by the indwelling Spirit of God and by the possession of the Spirit of Christ.

It will be seen, then, that it is the divine entering into the souls of men that is to destroy sin in them and enable them to fulfil the righteous requirement of the Law of God. That Law can itself never bring about this desired result. It can condemn sin, but cannot destroy it. It can lay down righteous requirements, but cannot furnish the force necessary to enable men to meet those

requirements. Christ condemned sin in the sense that he devoted it to a destruction which he will supply the force to accomplish. He enters into union with those who will accept him, and so begins the execution of the sentence which in his own life and death he passed upon sin. As those who are brought into this union with him are absolved from all condemnation, by virtue of that union, Christ himself having already borne the condemnation, so also those who are brought into this union with him are delivered from the power of sin, that power being progressively broken by virtue of the spiritual renewal which progressively takes place in them through the divine inworking.

“If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” Here is triumph over death. It is true, the Apostle would say, that physical death must come upon the Christian. By virtue of his connection with Adam, the Christian must die physically—“the body dead because of sin.” But for the Christian there is triumph over death in another way. If the Spirit of God dwells in us, then Christ has been formed in us, the hope of glory; there has been established between us and him a vital union. That being true, our destiny is linked to his. As he was raised up, so shall we be raised up. The man Jesus was the Christ. He was raised as a man, but not simply as a man. He was raised as the Head of a new race of men—as the Christ, the One anointed of God to redeem men. His resurrection, therefore, is a pledge of the resurrection of all who become vitally united to

him. It is the same thought as that expressed by Jesus himself to his disciples when he said: "Because I live, ye shall live also," and by Paul in another place: "Now Christ hath been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep."

The Apostle brings out here a thought exceedingly precious. The resurrection and immortality are not matters of course. The philosophers, from Plato down, have reasoned well for the immortality of the soul. But a strong argument might be framed on the other side of the question, based upon materialistic principles. If one should read all the reasons given for believing in immortality with a disposition to believe in it, he might be satisfied in a speculative sort of way with his doctrine. I say "in a speculative sort of way." The meaning is that, while death seemed a long way off for oneself, and when as yet it had not placed its chilling hand upon any very near and dear, one might be satisfied with a belief in immortality that had come out of a balancing of speculative reasons. But such a belief will not stand the strain of real trial. When the crisis comes of standing by the death-bed of one dearer than life, something better is needed than a doctrine of immortality that has been doubtfully reasoned out. There is not carrying power enough in reason for the mighty chasm of death. The way is too dark to be lighted by that feeble lamp. We want something to stand upon surer than reason can supply.

That better standing ground has been given us in God's revelation. When we see a dying loved one breathe his last, the strain is too great for an argument for immortality based upon analogies of Nature, or

upon the longings of the soul. But when we look in Joseph's new tomb where Jesus lay and see it empty and know that his resurrection is just as surely attested as any great fact of history; and when we remember that before his death he said to his disciples: "Because I live ye shall live also," then we have found something that can stand the strain of beholding the dearest friends depart, and something that can enable us to approach unflinchingly the hour and the article of death for ourselves.

The indwelling Christ absolves from all condemnation, and destroys sin, and triumphs over death!

Chapter XVIII

DEBT TO THE HOLY SPIRIT; CHILDREN OF GOD

8: 12-17

In the section now before us are two leading ideas. All the other ideas in the passage group themselves about these two.

The Believer Is in Debt to the Holy Spirit.

Whence came this debt? It arises out of what the Holy Spirit has done for the believer, and what he engages to do.

In considering the section of the Epistle immediately preceding this, we saw that for the man who is in Christ there is: (1) no condemnation; (2) destruction of sin; (3) triumph over death. Now, it is the Holy Spirit who brings a man into that vital and blessed relationship to Christ; and hence comes the believer's debt to the Spirit.

Is it not an inestimable blessing to be in position where it is true of one that there is no more condemnation for him before the tribunal of heaven; where it is true of him that the accursed thing sin in him is sure to undergo a progressive destruction; where it is true of him that the last enemy Death can no more hurt him, but is appointed to convey him to endless bliss?

And is that not a great debt which arises out of the good offices of the Holy Spirit who brings one into such a position?

What is the believer to do in order to discharge this debt? He is to live a life that is inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit. His debt is not to the flesh; and hence he is under no obligation to live a carnal life. The flesh has done nothing for him to bring him under debt to it. All the doings of the flesh, as distinguished from and opposed to the Spirit, have been against him and prejudicial to his highest interests. He should, accordingly, give the Spirit full sway; and through the reign of the Spirit he should cause "the doings of the flesh" to die.

Of course this does not mean that all "deeds of the body" are to be abjured. It is through the body, the flesh in one sense, that the spirit of man under the guidance of the Holy Spirit puts its good desires and purposes into execution. "The flesh" is used in Scripture as "the world" is used in a special sense. When "the world" is used in that special sense, it is what is wrong in the world that is meant; and so, when "the flesh" is used in that special sense it is the carnal, the sensual, that is meant.

When we are told by the Apostle "to cause the doings of the flesh to die" the idea is that a ruling principle with us must be to suppress all those wrong impulses that have their origin in the flesh, and also all excesses of good impulses that arise from the same source. We are so to yield ourselves to the influence and power of the Holy Spirit that we shall be lifted quite above the flesh in that sense; and so "its doings"

will die. These "doings," these hitherto or otherwise rank weeds thus bereft of support will wither, will dry up, will die.

The result of the meeting of our obligation to the Holy Spirit, the payment of our debt, is that we shall live. In like manner, failure to pay the debt will result in death to us. If we serve the Spirit, the flesh will die; but, if we serve the flesh, *we* shall die. "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." "They that plow in iniquity and sow mischief reap the same." "He that pursueth evil doeth it to his own death." "He that soweth iniquity shall reap calamity." This law is written in Nature and Providence as well as in God's Word. The law is eternal and unalterable. As you cannot put your hand in the flame and not be burnt, so you cannot sow to the flesh without reaping corruption. You cannot live after the flesh without dying as the result of a life yielded to passion. The flesh becomes master, tyrant, and you lose your liberty—it dies. Be sensual, and all the higher and nobler feelings and aspirations are smothered and die.

The following epitaph is said to have been written by Lord Byron to the memory of his thirty-third birthday: "Here lies in the eternity of the past, from whence there is no resurrection of the days, whatever there may be for the dust, the thirty-third year of an ill-spent life, which, after a lingering disease of many months, sank into a lethargy and expired, January 22, 1821, leaving a successor inconsolable for the very loss which oc-

casioned its existence." He had lived "after the flesh;" and in these remorseful words is reflected the death which resulted from such living.

We have seen men—every now and then we see them—who live "after the flesh" and who have died, though they still move among the living. Moving corpses they are! Physically they are alive; but the impulses, the aspirations, the motives that ought to stir within their bosoms, are no longer stirring there. Other impulses have been obeyed until the higher ones have ceased to assert themselves, have fallen into a lethargy, and have died. Oh, the pity that we should ever live after the flesh, knowing as we do that spiritual death is the inevitable result!

The Believer is a Son of God

This fact the Apostle sets forth as a proof that those who, through the Spirit cause "the doings of the flesh" to die, shall live. As many as are thus led by the Spirit of God are children of God; and, being his children, they cannot but live. Being his children, they partake of his life; and, since he must live, so they also must live. Jesus himself had said to his disciples: "Because I live, ye shall live also."

It is thus that Paul was led to introduce the sonship of believers, at this point in his Epistle. Having introduced it, he goes on to develop some truths connected with that relationship. One of those truths is that the disposition proper to that relationship is the filial disposition—"Ye received not the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby

we cry, "Abba, Father." The spirit of the pious Jew in the time of Paul was a "spirit of bondage." That had been his own spirit before his conversion to Christ. It was a spirit of bondage; and a natural accompaniment of the "spirit of bondage" was "fear." "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden," said Jesus, "and I will give you rest."—He was speaking to people who were in bondage to the law of doing—people whose hope of favor with God rested upon the possibility of an exact performance of all the requirements laid upon them by "the tradition of the elders." The effort to realize their hope became a grievous bondage and a crushing burden; while the fear that they might fail in the realization of that hope was destruction to their peace.

The life of those pious Jews is reproduced by some people who claim to be, and suppose they are, Christians. What they call their Christian life is really a bondage; and fear is a canker to their peace. They are as really under bondage to the law of doing as ever Saul of Tarsus or any other pious Jew was; and they are as really hounded by fear of failing to win the favor of the Lord.

Now, Paul had come to know a more excellent way; and he wished to show it to others. The proper disposition, he came to see, is the filial disposition. It is the spirit, not of a slave, but of a son. Our service to the Lord is not to be compelled by bondage, nor is our peace to be destroyed by fear. What we do is not to be done because we believe that failing to do, we shall fail of heaven. No! that is not the filial spirit, and that is not the proper spirit for God's children. We are to

pursue a given course because we believe that to pursue it will be pleasing to our Heavenly Father; and some other course we are to avoid because we believe that pursuing it would be displeasing to him. His pleasure is what should determine our conduct. To make that the determining principle, and to delight in it—such is the filial spirit, and such is the spirit that properly animates the Christian in all his life of service to his Lord.

Another of the truths brought out by the Apostle as connected with our relationship of sons of God, is that the Spirit of God bears witness with our spirits that we are his children. There is here a sharp distinction between the human spirit and the divine. The divine bears witness with the human. Indeed, the divine bears witness to the human, and the two conspire to attest the sonship to God of the believer. The same distinction had already been drawn when the Apostle spoke of the groaning of the human and the groaning of the Holy Spirit separately. Something analagous to this separate testimony is found in the life of Jesus. It is he who looks up and says, "My Father;" and it is the Father who responds, "Thou art my Son." So the passage before us teaches, the filial spirit that has been produced in us inspires us with the cry of love. "My Father!" and there comes down from the heart of God, by the voice of the Holy Spirit, the answer, "My child." As our arms are stretched out to take hold of him, he reaches down to draw us to his bosom. (Godet.) The filial spirit within me says, "I am a child of God;" and at the same time the Holy Spirit says, "Thou art a child of God."

Parallel to this passage are others, such as 2 Corin-

thians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30; 1 John 3:24 and 4:13. In all these places the Holy Spirit is referred to as witnessing, in one way or another, to the believer's position.

The Holy Spirit speaks to us? Yes; that is true beyond question. Nothing is more plainly taught. The speaking, as a rule certainly, is not audible. (Nobody may say that it is *never* audible.) There is spiritual contact. Spirit acts upon spirit. The Holy Spirit acts upon the human spirit. Impulses are given. Impressions are made. Revelations? Yes; revelations. Is not their time past? No; never will be, till we shall have learned all we are capable of knowing. Everything any man learns is, at first and in a sense, a revelation to him. The Holy Spirit may, and does, reveal truth to us. "He shall guide you into all the truth." He may do so by opening up the Word of God. He may also reveal truth independently of the Word. Two things, however, must be borne in mind. First, none of his revelations are out of harmony with the Word. He never contradicts himself. He gave the Word; and he does not now reveal anything out of harmony with that Word. Again, he does not reveal independently of the Word the things already revealed there. If we care not enough for these things to search the Scriptures for them, we need not expect to be favored with another and independent revelation.

The point, however, in the passage before us is, that the Holy Spirit conspires with the Spirit of the believer to give him assurance of his adoption. The believer may be assured of his acceptance with God. There is no need that he should go through this world singing:

“ ’Tis a point I long to know;
Oft it causes anxious thought;
Do I love the Lord or no;
Am I his or am I not?”

In the Word of God, the Spirit has laid down certain marks of sonship to God. These may be examined. In addition, the Spirit, as if to make assurance doubly sure, gives his direct testimony in the heart of the believer.

Still another truth brought out by Paul here, as closely connected with our sonship to God, is our consequent heirship. Being his children, we are his heirs. But the great Apostle was not satisfied with declaring simple heirship for believers. It might seem that such declaration would have been enough. Not so. Paul was on the Mount. He saw large things—a glorious patrimony. He must do his inspired best to outline the proportions and riches of that patrimony. In human relations one might be an heir, and yet have no great estate or great part in a great estate. His heirship might be a very unimportant affair. The estate might be small, or there might be a right of primogeniture. The Apostle declares that believers are not simply heirs of God, however great such heirship might necessarily be, but that they are *joint-heirs with Christ*. They are heirs with him to all the heavenly estate. All of its riches and glory, to the utmost of their enlarged and enlarging capacity, will be theirs! His riches will be their riches. His glory will be their glory. They will sit with him on his throne.

There is, however, one condition attached. It is that

they suffer. That means that between the believer here and the glory there lies a career of suffering. Jesus suffered; and those who follow him must suffer. He laid that down as a condition of discipleship. "If any man will come after me," he said, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Every Christian must have his cross and Calvary. Paul, to the Philipians, said that he strove to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death. To the Galatians he said that he bore branded in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

There is, let it be conceded, no virtue in suffering for its own sake. To seek suffering, under the impression that there is necessarily reward for those who suffer, is to suffer without reward. But on the other hand, to be a follower of Jesus involves what Paul denominates "the fellowship of his sufferings," and "becoming conformed to his death." The title to joint-heirship with him is conditioned by suffering. The path by which the inheritance of glory must be reached is strewed with crosses; and he who travels that way must be a cross-bearer, and must suffer crucifixion. If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. If we bear the cross, we shall also wear the crown. Suffering and glory, the cross and the crown—these are linked together; they cannot be separated. "Flowery beds of ease" are not to be thought of. The sword, battle, blood—emblems of strife and suffering—these are fitter images of what we may expect to attend our career to victory and glory.

Chapter XIX

SUFFERING AND GLORY

8: 18-30

In the last clause of the section just preceding this, glory and suffering are linked together. Joint-heirship with Christ is linked to joint-suffering with him. Community of glory involves community of suffering.

The design of the section upon which we are now entering is to furnish grounds of encouragement to endure the suffering which precedes the glory. The grounds of encouragement presented are three: namely, (1) the greatness of the glory; (2) the help of the Holy Spirit; and (3) the working together of all things for the good of the elect.

The greatness of the glory the Apostle sets forth in a way most peculiar and interesting.

The leading feature of this part of his argument is the picture he draws of the Creation. By "the Creation" we are to understand him to mean what we commonly mean by "Nature." We speak of "Nature and Man." By "Nature" we mean the whole of "Creation" besides man—the whole inanimate and irrational portion of "Creation." This "Creation," though irrational and inanimate, the Apostle boldly personifies. There she stands, as he has projected her figure upon the canvas of the imagination. Her head is raised. Her eye is fixed intently upon a point on the horizon

from which expected help is to come. So much of the picture is drawn by a single word—the word rendered “earnest expectation.” But the picture is not thus made complete. Sadness must be put into the face—deep lines of suffering must be drawn. It is deliverance that she is so earnestly looking for—deliverance from a bondage to which she has been subjected as a consequence of the fall of her complement, man. It is a bondage to imperfection and suffering. In that bondage she is groaning under pain, and is sighing for deliverance, and is expecting deliverance. Her deliverance is to come with the “manifestation of the sons of God.” It is in the time of the glorifying of the elect that she will be delivered from her bondage.

This, of course, is poetic. But there is truth back of the poetic imagery. What is that truth? It is that, somehow, Nature was so united to man that his fall involved her subjection to “vanity,” or imperfection—his “corruption” carried with it her “bondage;” and “the manifestation of the sons of God,” or the glorification of the elect, will carry with it her deliverance from imperfection.

That great, on-coming deliverance which Nature is here represented as expecting, is spoken of by the Apostle Peter, in one of his addresses (Acts 3:21) as “the restitution of all things.” In his second Epistle (3:13) he speaks of “new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.” And in the Revelation (21:1) there is a vision of a “new heaven and a new earth.” The poet Tennyson has described the expected consummation as “the one far-off, divine event to which the whole creation moves.”

Parallel to the travailing and groaning expectancy of Nature, Paul brings in the fact that, with deep sighings, the elect themselves await their full salvation, the complete realization of their adoption; that is, the redemption of their bodies.

There is a prevalent idea that the salvation that is in Christ extends only to the souls of men. "Already in the Apostolic Age, we find persons who, intoxicated with a false spiritualism, gave out that salvation concerned only man's higher nature, and who abandoned the body to everlasting destruction." (Godet.) In his first letter to the church at Corinth (15: 12) Paul had to deal with people who, while they professed to be Christians, denied the resurrection of the body. In his second letter to Timothy (2: 18), he describes certain heretics who said that the resurrection was already past, these heretics confounding the resurrection, doubtless, with the spiritual raising of souls from death in sin.

The Pauline doctrine, on the contrary, is that our salvation will be complete with the redemption of our bodies. It is not that we are to be saved out of our bodies, but the bodies themselves are to be saved. They are not, to be sure, to be saved without change. They are to be changed into "spiritual" bodies, whatever Paul may mean by "spiritual" bodies. We do not know what a "spiritual" body is; but of this we are sure: namely, that, according to Paul's doctrine, these bodies of ours are not to be destroyed and lost, but are to be changed, and in that change is to consist their redemption.

Now, Paul says that believers, who have the Spirit,

groan within themselves as they wait for the redemption of their bodies. The Spirit of God puts within them an earnest longing for their complete emancipation from the conditions that limit and depress them here as the result of sin. Their salvation rests in hope. It is not yet perfected. It is only ideally consummated. The full realization of the ideal is placed in the future; and it is for such realization that the Spirit within them inspires their groanings.

It was thus that Paul chose to set forth his first ground of encouragement to believers cheerfully to endure the suffering which must lie along their pathway to that glory which they are to share with the Eternal Son.

It was said, above, that this first ground of encouragement presented by him was the *greatness* of the glory to which we are to pass through suffering. The idea in his mind may have been the *certainty* of the glory. Possibly it was a blending of the two ideas, the greatness and the certainty of the glory. The argument which he has made would probably lend itself equally well to either or both. That event, or that condition of things, must be great to which the whole Creation is moving, for which all Nature is looking and longing, and for which the Spirit of God in believers inspires them to sigh so profoundly. In like manner, it may be said that what is attested in such manner must be certain in the very highest and most absolute sense.

The *Help of the Spirit* is set forth by the Apostle as the second ground of encouragement to endure the

suffering that lies along the believers' pathway to the final glory.

The Holy Spirit is our Helper. That is the meaning of the expression used in our Lord's last discourse to designate him. He is the "Comforter," certainly; but that designation is not broad, or general, enough to cover his ministry. To give comfort, or consolation, is only a part of his work. He is Helper in the largest sense. Wherever our "infirmity" causes us to need help, there the Spirit is present to help us. No matter what our troubles may be as we pass on to glory, he is with us to furnish us such help as we may need.

In the passage before us, an example of his help is given. The example is furnished by the matter of prayer. Our infirmity extends to the province of knowledge, even with regard to what we ought to pray for. Paul had himself already, in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, given account of a notable experience of his own in not knowing what to pray for. It was the case of the "thorn in the flesh," which he thrice besought the Lord to remove, and which the Lord did not see fit to remove. In that situation, the Spirit raised him above, or out of, himself. The Lord said to him: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my power is made perfect in weakness." Because he was raised out of himself, Paul could say: "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore, I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong." Even the Son of man him-

self was in perplexity as to what he should pray for, under the circumstances into which he had come. The time of his Passion was drawing near. He saw the great billows of suffering rolling on to overwhelm him, if that were possible. It was then that he said: "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour.' But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." Then came, therefore, a voice out of heaven saying: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." Something similar to that we see in Gethsemane. We, doubtless, should not call it perplexity, nor should it be called hesitation. But there is, at least, a sort of duality observable in the prayer which, in the presence of the oncoming agony, he there offered to the Father: "Oh, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me—nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt." That duality seems the more marked when we remember that three times he offered the same prayer for deliverance—each time, immediately adding his avowal of acquiescence in the will of the Father.

The believer finds himself in perplexity. He knows not what he ought to pray for under his circumstances. What is the right thing to ask God for? The perplexity may take that shape. What does he want? His perplexity may even take that turn. There may be in his soul a longing that is too deep to be fathomed by him. He may not be able to interpret that longing to his own mind. It may be entirely beyond his power of expression. Under such circumstances, the Spirit of God makes intercession in the heart. He does so with groanings that cannot be uttered—"sighs whose mean-

ing words are powerless to convey" (Meyer) ; and God, who searcheth hearts, "knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit."

The second ground of encouragement, then, is that the Holy Spirit puts himself along with us under all our burdens (takes the burden on himself in our stead), and by sharing them with us, fills out our lack of strength to carry them—"helpeth our infirmity."

The working together of all things for the good of the elect, is Paul's third ground of encouragement to bear the suffering that will come on the way to glory.

No matter what the cause of suffering may be, we are assured that it must conspire with all the rest of our experiences to work us good. The proof of this position is that God's people are the subjects of a divine decree, the final aim, or goal, of which is their eternal glorification.

The occasion which Paul thus had for offering proof of his thoroughly settled conviction that all things work together for good to believers, led him to touch upon the subject of election. He had just described believers as "them that love God," and as "them who are the called according to his purpose." He had already thus identified "them that love God" with "them that are the called according to his purpose." Now, then, in giving proof of the assurance that all things work together for good to the individuals thus described, he develops the expression, "called according to his purpose"—he exhibits some of the steps, at least, in the progress of the divine purpose of salvation to these people.

The word, in this development, upon which, perhaps,

there would be most disagreement among expositors, is the word "foreknow." All believe in election of some sort. The question is, What sort? Our understanding of this word "foreknow" determines what sort of election we believe in.

What, then, is the meaning of "foreknow" in this passage?

Naturally, one would answer that it means "to know beforehand." A little reflection, however, will reveal the inadequacy of that answer. It is a particular class of people who are here described. To say that God knew them beforehand would be no description of them as a class. He knew all men from the beginning; and hence to say that he knew certain people beforehand does not distinguish them from all the rest of the world of mankind.

The word "know," in Scripture usage, often means more than a simple perception by the understanding. Take, for example, the saying of our Lord: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Here, of course, the knowing is more than an intellectual apprehension of truth; for eternal life is identified with the knowing, and something more than intellectual apprehension of truth (no matter what sort of truth) is necessary to eternal life. The knowing which is here identified with eternal life involves, beyond all question, a living appropriation of the object known, on the part of the individual knowing. The knowing clearly involves an internal fellowship. As it is with man's knowledge of God, so it is with God's knowledge of man—something more than intellectual apprehension

is often meant by the Scriptures when the word is used. In Psalm 1:6, we have a clear example. There it is said that God "knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish." What is meant is that God looks upon the way of the righteous with approval—he knows it with favor. Contrasted with that approval is the disapproval with which he contemplates the way of the ungodly, and the result of which is that they shall perish. Another example may be found in Matthew 7:23, where Jesus represents himself, in the Great Day, as saying to some: "I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." He "never knew" them; and yet he knows that they are "workers of iniquity." He "never knew them" as his servants—of course that was what he meant, when he said he "never knew" them. Other examples might be given. It is not necessary. The usage is beyond question—the word "know" often carries with it the idea of fellowship or approval.

When Paul speaks of those whom God foreknew, we are to understand the word "foreknew" as involving some such idea as approval or fellowship.

There are some who say that "whom he did foreknow," means those whom God foreknew as certain to exercise faith. The exercise of faith is, according to this view, the distinguishing feature of these individuals. God's eternal election, they say, is based upon a foreseen faith on the part of the elect.

There are others who say that "whom he did foreknow" means individuals whom God foreknew as those with whom he would put himself into saving fellowship; or, to put it another way, those whom, for

gracious reasons of his own, he elected to salvation.

The difference between these two views, that are regarded as antagonistic, and mutually exclusive, does not touch the question as to whether there is contained in the word "foreknow" any idea besides that of simple prevision. Both assume that there is an additional idea. The question is as to what is that idea. Does the prevision rest upon certain individuals as those whose faith is the ground of their election, or upon them as those whose faith is the consequence of their election? In other words, is the fellowship recognized by both views as involved in the meaning of "foreknow," a fellowship which results from man's initiative or from God's initiative?

Thus we see that the settlement of this question is resolved into the settlement of the question as to how a soul is brought into saving relation to Christ. The two views set forth above as contradictory and mutually exclusive, are probably both wrong, as they are held and stated. As a matter of fact God did foreknow his elect as those who would, under given influences, yield their hearts and lives to Christ. It may not be proper to say that the election was based upon that foreseen faith as a ground. On the other hand, it would not be proper to say that, though God foresaw that certain individuals would, under certain influences, yield their hearts and lives to Christ, he, nevertheless, elected them for gracious reasons of his own, apart from this—which might seem to suggest purely arbitrary reasons.

Whatever may be the difficulties in election, they inhere in conversion, in faith, in repentance, in regenera-

tion. It is the ever-present and insoluble problem of the interplay, or co-operation, of the divine and the human.

Paul stretches out the saving chain—foreknowledge and foreordination away back in eternity; calling and justification in time; glorification in the coming “age.”

The ground of encouragement which the Apostle has here presented, ought surely to induce us cheerfully to endure all our trials and patiently to wait for the glory.

Chapter XX

A SHOUT OF TRIUMPH

8: 31-39

The section 8:31-39 of the Epistle is a shout of triumph, a song of assurance.

It has both a general and a special connection with what goes before.

In its general connection, it is a sort of rounding out of the whole preceding part of the Epistle. "What, then, shall we say to these things?" "These things" may be properly regarded as designating the leading ideas brought out in the discussion so far.

"If God is for us, who is against us?" The great theme of the Epistle ("A righteousness of God for unrighteous men") has been propounded, explained, and defended. This gracious method of salvation, this justification by grace through faith, displays the wondrous love of God. He is for us. Since he is for us, we are safe—no one can be against us—no opposition to our final glorification can be made effective.

The fact that God is for us carries with it the assurance that we shall have furnished us everything necessary to take us to glory. He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, that a divine righteousness might be offered us; and, having done that, he will certainly add any other blessing we may need for our final and complete salvation.

How shall his elect ever come into condemnation? Where is there any one who can lay anything against them that will prevent their glorification? God is the justifier of his people—who can condemn them? If the Judge has passed sentence of acquittal, there can be no more being under condemnation. If he has been satisfied, the case has been settled, and there is no one who can condemn.

This gracious method of salvation involved a crucified Saviour. Christ Jesus died for us. He rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, where he intercedes for us. Such love and interest have in them the guarantee that we shall never be forsaken, but shall be preserved to the end. There is nothing that can separate us from the love of Christ. In all the range of thought, nothing can be conceived that will have the power to break that sacred bond which binds to heaven and which surely draws us thither. No matter what the enemies may be, we shall more than conquer—no matter what they may be, there is in the divine preservation sufficient force to enable us to overcome even more.

In its special connection, our passage links right on to the three verses which immediately precede it.

There is a divine purpose in election. There are individuals who are designated as "the called according to his purpose." They are people of whom it is said that God foreknew them; that he foreordained them to be conformed to the image of his Son; that he called them; that he justified them; and that he glorified them. These people, in verse thirty-three, are called "God's elect." His elect are such by virtue of a divine purpose; and they are comprehended in a divine plan.

The end of that purpose and plan is the glorification of these people. As his purpose cannot fail of execution, as his plan cannot be frustrated, so the elect cannot fail to be glorified. No matter what the enemies may be, their final and complete overthrow, and the final and complete salvation of believers, are events perfectly assured by the divine purpose and plan.

That is what Paul had to "say to these things." That is the meaning of his shout of triumph, his song of assurance.

Thus we are taught the certainty of perfected salvation, the certainty of final glory, for all true believers.

Are we to understand that every true believer, every regenerate person, will certainly get to heaven? Exactly that. That is what we believe Paul to teach in this passage. If he *does* teach it, the matter is settled. If that is not what he teaches, it is difficult to discover the meaning of his language.

Is there any reason why we should undertake to interpret his words differently? Is this teaching without support from other passages of Scripture? Or is it out of harmony with other passages of God's Word, or the general teaching of that Word as to salvation? Or is it contradicted by any passage?

(1) Is it without support from other Scriptures? If so, it might be well to seek a different interpretation for our passage. It certainly is a good rule not to rest an important doctrine upon a single text of scripture, unless that text is not susceptible of a different construction. Is our passage, then, the only one that seems to teach that the truly regenerate will certainly be saved? Look at John 10:27-29, where Jesus says: "My sheep

hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my Father's hand." In writing to the Philippians (1:6), Paul uses this expression: "Being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ." In 2 Thessalonians 3:3, the same Apostle says: "The Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and guard you from the evil one." In 2 Timothy 1:12, he expresses his own confidence in these words: "I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day." The Apostle Peter speaks of believers as those who "by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." It will be observed how Peter and Paul use the word "guard" in the passages quoted. There is the idea of a sentinel standing guard. If God guards our eternal interests, it is not conceivable that we shall fail of heaven.

(2) Is the doctrine of the certainty of the glorification of believers out of harmony with the general teaching of God's Word with reference to salvation? If so, that would be a reason to seek a different interpretation of our passage. There can certainly be no teaching that is out of harmony with the general scheme. Is this doctrine, then, out of harmony with the general scheme?

Salvation is by *grace*. There was a gracious purpose of God touching every individual who may have become a true believer. That purpose involved grace to complete salvation, as well as to begin it. If God

has given the grace necessary to bring an individual into the kingdom, it certainly is not making him inconsistent with himself when it is affirmed that he will supply the grace necessary to keep that individual in the kingdom. "The gifts and the calling of God are not repented of" (Rom. 11:29).

Salvation begins in *regeneration*. There is a new life. It is described as "Christ in you the hope of glory." Christ is certainly a living Christ—ever-living and ever-to-live. Surely, then, it is not out of harmony with this view of salvation to say that the true believer will never be lost, but will be guarded, and will persevere unto glory. To the woman at Jacob's well, Jesus said: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." A little later, at Jerusalem, he said: "He that believeth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

(3) Is our doctrine of the certain glorification of all believers contradicted by any passage of God's Word? If so, we shall be obliged to seek some other interpretation of Romans 8:31-39, even though the interpretation we have given it might *seem* to be supported by other passages, and to be in harmony with the general tenor of Scripture teaching. Are there any passages, then, that contradict this doctrine?

Let us take two as representative of all that could be put into this class. There are none that have more of the appearance of being contradictory than do these.

There is John 15:2—"Every branch in me that

beareth not fruit, he taketh away." In the sixth verse of the same chapter, we read: "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." Christ is the vine; the Father is the vine-dresser; disciples of Christ are the branches. The language is highly figurative. It must be interpreted in a general way. We cannot press every detail, as we might in the case of language of a literal and logical character. That being true, it is surely quite admissible to say that the branches that are to be removed as not bearing fruit, represent nominal Christians, those who profess religion without possessing it. There they are, in a sense growing along with the other branches; but they are without the fruit of the Spirit. Their professions and pretensions, without corresponding life and service, may well be represented by the leaves of the branches that bear no fruit.

Again, there is Hebrews 6:4-6, "As touching those who were once enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fall away, it is impossible to renew them to repentance; seeing that they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." This is to be understood as a hypothetical case. The case is supposed, in order to show what would be the sad state of the Christian, if he should fail to persevere. It comes under the general class of passages in which exhortations and warnings are used to secure that co-operation on our part which is included in the divine plan. A case parallel to this in actual life is recorded in the twenty-seventh chapter of the Acts.

Paul was assured by an angel of God that the whole crew on his ship would be saved; and yet, when the sailors were trying to abandon the ship, Paul said to the centurion and soldiers: "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." The safety of the whole crew was already assured; but, if these sailors should flee, all others on the ship would be lost. So it is here. The final salvation of believers is assured; but, if they do not hold on, they will not be saved. But they will hold on!

This passage from Hebrews would prove too much, if we should attempt to use it in the interest of a recurring apostasy. If it teaches apostasy at all, the apostasy is final and irretrievable. There can be no restoration in any case.

But do not Christians sometimes fall from grace and perish? No. How about Judas? Jesus said that he was a devil—"Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" This he said a year before the betrayal. But have we not seen men profess faith in Christ, run well for a while, and then go back, and die in sin? There are two possible explanations. They themselves may have been mistaken about their conversion; or they may have purposely made a false profession.

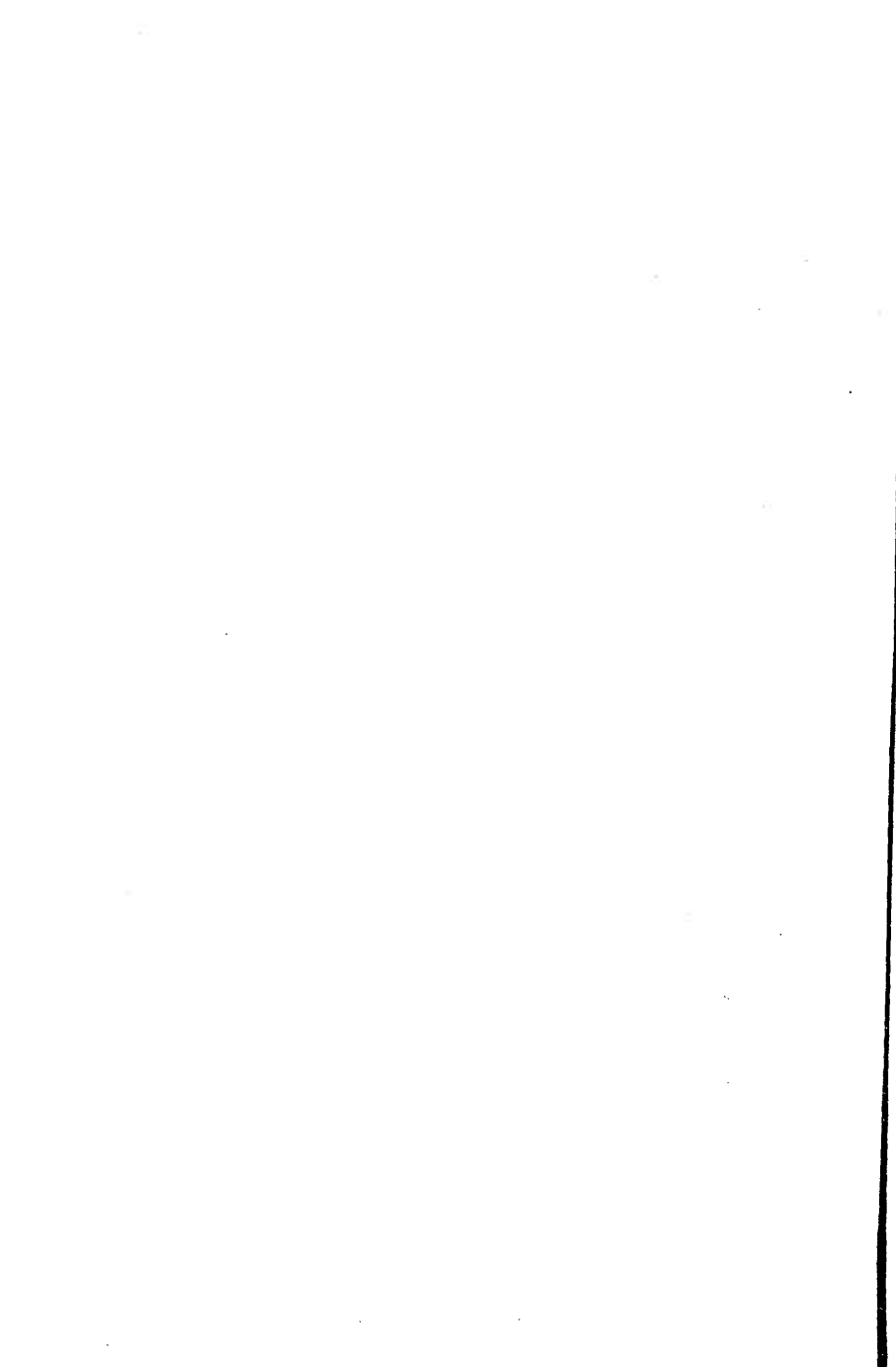
Is not this doctrine of final glorification of all believers unfavorable to holiness? Certainly not. No man who is regenerate will say: "I am safe, therefore I will live in sin."

On the contrary it encourages to holiness, just as hope encourages to effort.

PART V

EXCLUSION OF ISRAEL FROM THE
MESSIANIC SALVATION

9: 1—11: 36



Chapter XXI

GOD NOT UNFAITHFUL

9: 1-27

In our study of this Epistle so far, we have discovered two groups of chapters. The first five chapters are comprised in the first group. There the doctrine of justification through faith—of divine righteousness for unrighteous men offered upon the condition of faith—was propounded and developed. That done, it was necessary, in the view of the Apostle, that the bearing of the doctrine along certain lines should be considered. In the first place, it must be shown that the doctrine of justification through faith provides for holy living. To the showing of that, chapters six to eight, comprising the second group, have been devoted. The Apostle conceived certain objections to be raised in that direction; and those he has answered. Then, in the second place, he thought it necessary to show that his doctrine was consistent with the rejection of Christ by the great mass of Israel. He supposes an ardent Israelite to be objecting to the doctrine on the ground that Jesus was rejected by Israel, and that, according to Paul's teaching, Israel was, therefore, excluded from the Messianic salvation. The exclusion of Israel from the Messianic salvation thus becomes the subject of the third group of chapters, comprising the ninth, tenth, and eleventh.

Taking up that subject at the beginning of the ninth chapter, he devotes the first five verses to the most earnest, solemn, and pathetic asseveration of his interest in the salvation of Israel. It often happens that, because a man holds a doctrine that bears, or seems to bear, hard on some other people, he is supposed to have some ill feeling towards those people. An experience like that was Paul's. He taught justification through faith in Jesus as the Christ. The mass of his people obstinately refused to accept Jesus as the Christ. According to his doctrine, therefore, they were excluded from the kingdom of God and the Messianic salvation. That seemed to them to prove him an enemy of Israel. Hence he begins his discussion of the exclusion of Israel, with the strongest possible assurance of his love for his people. He declares in the most solemn manner that he would be willing to have the anathema to rest on himself, instead of on them. He does not assume that such a thing would be possible; but, if it were possible he would be willing himself to be lost that they might be saved. They are his people. They are a people with a glorious past, with a heaven-illuminated and glory-tipped history; and his love for them is so great that he would be willing to suffer, in their stead, the ruin which, according to his doctrine, is hanging over them.

Having thus declared his love for his people, the Apostle proceeds, in verse six, to show that this exclusion from the Messianic kingdom and salvation does not make God unfaithful.

Let us get the exact point of view at which Paul, for this argument, places himself. It is not the point of view of a speculative philosopher determined to work

out a perfectly consistent scheme of thought, in which there shall be left no difficulties, and with reference to which speculative readers can ask no unanswerable questions. That is distinctly not his point of view; and whoever supposes it to be so will be sure not to understand his discussion. On the contrary, he places himself at the point of view of a Christian Apostle to whom has been revealed God's plan of salvation in Christ, and who believes in the Old Testament Scriptures, and is addressing a Jewish objector who also believes in the Old Testament Scriptures.

The objection is this: If, as you say, men stand justified before God upon the ground of faith in Jesus Christ alone, and only upon that ground, the great mass of Israel, who reject Christ, are excluded from the kingdom of God; and that makes Jehovah untrue to his covenant with Israel.

Observe that, in order to meet this objection, Paul needs no speculation. He and the objector occupy common ground in the fact that alike they heartily believe the Old Testament Scriptures. All he has to do, therefore, is to show from the Old Testament that the exclusion of unbelieving Israel from the Messianic kingdom and salvation (in accordance with his doctrine) is in harmony with Jehovah's covenant with Israel.

He holds that there are *two* Israels. One of them is carnal, and the other is spiritual. The two are not identical. In the covenants, Jehovah did not bind himself to any hard-and-fast arrangement by which he was obliged to recognize the two as identical, and obliged to make all who are Israelites according to the

flesh, partakers of eternal salvation. That is what the objector supposes. He is one of those Jews whose idea is that blood connection with Abraham creates an absolute, inviolable, unforfeitable claim to salvation. To meet that view, Paul brings the Scripture history into requisition. Israel as an elect nation takes its rise in Abraham. It was with Abraham that the principle of selection began to be applied. But did that bind Jehovah to all of Abraham's descendants? Let the record answer. Did not the principle of *exclusion* appear soon after the principle of selection began to be applied? Did not God select Isaac and exclude Ishmael? Do you find that his covenant with Abraham bound him to *all* of Abraham's descendants? It is true that Isaac and Ishmael had different mothers; but come to Jacob and Esau. They were twins. But before they were born Jehovah applied the principle of selection and of exclusion along together. Jacob was selected and Esau was excluded.

Note, as we pass along, that it is not necessary for us to conclude from Paul's argument either that Isaac and Jacob were eternally saved, or that Ishmael and Esau were eternally lost. That is not the point. So far as this argument is concerned, it makes no difference what was the eternal destiny of any of these men. Paul is simply showing that, in the building up, or growing, of a nation through which to accomplish his eternal purpose of salvation for the world, Jehovah, up to a certain point, applied the principle of exclusion. He is showing that in the very building of this nation Jehovah so acted as to prove that he did not consider himself bound by the covenant with Abraham in any

such way as the objector supposed. The examples of exclusion pointed to the fact that "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel," that there are "children of the flesh" and "children of the promise;" that, while all those who should be included in the elect nation, would enjoy the special favors conferred upon the nation, yet only those who were like "faithful Abraham" in spirit, would partake of the spiritual blessings conferred upon him.

Paul has appealed to the history of the beginnings of this elect nation to prove to his Jewish objector that Jehovah is not bound to give the Messianic salvation to people simply because they are children of Abraham according to the flesh. His appeal is surely sustained.

In speaking of the divine selection of Jacob and rejection of Esau, Paul said that the selection and rejection had taken place before the children were born or had done anything good or bad, and that this was so in order "that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." He supposes that statement to arouse in the mind of the objector the complaint that to speak thus of God is really to charge him with unrighteousness. The Apostle answers that complaint by another appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures. If the statement is in accord with the Scriptures, he would argue, then it cannot involve a charge of unrighteousness against God. The cases of Pharaoh and Moses are brought forward to show that the statement does accord with Scripture. When Moses asked to see Jehovah's glory, Jehovah, intending to favor him, declared his sovereign freedom in the bestowment of his favors. To Pharaoh it was

said that into his historic position he had been brought in order that through him Jehovah's power might be manifested and his name published in the earth.

With regard to the statement in verse eighteen, let it be said that the Scriptures teach that God does harden human hearts, but he does so only when a self-hardening of the heart has already occurred. For example, in the case of Pharaoh, the account in Exodus distinctly states five times that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, before it is said that God hardened it. Then it is once said that God hardened it; after that, once that Pharaoh hardened it; and, finally, five times that God hardened it. The teaching seems to be that, if a man obstinately resists Jehovah's appeals to him to do the right thing, and, by such resistance, hardens his heart, the time may come when Jehovah will give him over to hardness of heart—will, indeed, send his wrath upon him in the form of a hopeless hardening of heart, as, according to the first chapter of this Epistle, he revealed his "wrath" against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of the Gentiles, who held down the truth in unrighteousness, the penalty there being that they were "given up" to a "reprobate mind."

The sovereign freedom of Jehovah, stated in verse eleven, and so clearly proved from Scripture in verses fourteen to eighteen, Paul supposes to have aroused his objector to a sort of angry rebelliousness of spirit, inasmuch that he angrily complains: If that is so, why, then, should Jehovah find fault with those who do not believe on Christ? If he does as he pleases so absolutely, then who can resist his will and why should he

find fault? Are we not just what his sovereign pleasure has made us? Paul's reply is twofold.

In the first place, he rebukes the spirit of the objector. "Now, my friend, just remember that you are a man, and that he of whom you are complaining is God. Who are you to dispute with God about what he does? I have shown you what he does, according to his own Word, which you accept; and now who are you to complain of him? As the potter has the right to make of the same lump some vessels for one use and others for another use, has not God the right to fashion out of the mass of humanity as it lies before him one individual for one purpose and another individual for another purpose? Has he not the right to do that? And who are you to show such a spirit about it as you are now cherishing? Shame on you! How much better and more becoming that you should be humble, instead of fractious!"

In the second place, Paul holds that there is no just ground for complaint against God's procedure. If Jehovah in long-suffering mercy bears with sinners, although he designs their destruction for their sins—bears with them for the purpose of showing his merciful character, and for the sake of manifesting his glory in those whom he, for reason, has chosen to salvation—if he does that, what have you to say? Is there any injustice in that? Has he done any wrong to the sinner who is to be destroyed? Has he not only shown mercy to the elect? And may not those elect be from Gentiles as well as Jews? Must that class include only Jews? May it not exclude some Jews and include

some Gentiles? Why not? All are sinners. God is dealing with sinners, who have no claim to mercy. May he not choose whom he will without wrong to others? Your prophets indicated long ago that such would be his course.

Thus, as the Apostle began this passage with an appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures, so he closes it.

Chapter XXII

ISRAEL ALONE TO BLAME

9: 30—10: 21

Remember that chapter nine of the Epistle is the first of a third group of chapters, and that this group comprises chapters nine, ten, and eleven. The group is devoted to the discussion of Israel's exclusion from the Messianic kingdom. Paul assumed that objection from the Jewish point of view would be made in this form: Your doctrine of justification by grace through faith shuts unbelieving Israel out of the kingdom of Messiah; but that cannot be, since Israel is God's elect nation; therefore, your doctrine is not true. The unbelief of Israel is thus brought forward as conclusive proof that Paul's doctrine is not true.

The Jewish thought underlying this objection is that God's covenant with Abraham bound the Almighty in a hard-and-fast arrangement according to which he would be obliged to give Israel all the benefits of the Messianic salvation, whatever that salvation might involve, and that a failure to give them those benefits was a failure of God's word of promise. The ninth chapter, through verse twenty-nine, is devoted to setting forth God's sovereign freedom. In the use of that freedom, he had applied the principle of exclusion almost as soon as he began to apply the principle of selection. Abraham had other sons than Isaac, but it

was Isaac who was selected, the others being excluded from the special blessings promised to Abraham. From Isaac there came Esau and Jacob; but it was only Jacob who was selected.

Having thus shown Jehovah's sovereign freedom, the Apostle turns at 9:30 to lay the blame of the exclusion of unbelieving Israel at their own door. This phase of the subject he pursues to the end of the tenth chapter of the Epistle.

The cause of the failure of Israel is stated at 9:32.

The procedure and the success of the Gentiles have just been briefly contrasted with the procedure and the failure of Israel (9:30, 31).

The Gentiles had not pursued righteousness, and yet had attained to righteousness; that is, the righteousness of faith. The figure is that of the race-course and prize-winning. It is not denied that some Gentiles had intense longing for holiness. Nor is it denied that most Gentiles had some aspiration in that direction. What is denied is that the Gentile section of humanity had made a business of pursuing holiness by a system of "good deeds." The argument is aimed at Jewish objection, and represents Jewish ideas. The Jewish idea of pursuing holiness was to do so by a system of "good works." What Paul is saying is that the Gentile portion of the race had not by any system of "good works" pursued holiness as a runner in the games pursues a prize. That idea of pressing forward and winning holiness was not in the Gentile mind. There was, consequently, no inveterate prejudice against the righteousness of faith; and so the Gentiles attained what they were not pursuing; that is to say, they attained the

righteousness of faith because they were not pursuing a righteousness of "works."

In contrast to the procedure and success of the Gentiles were the procedure and failure of the Jews. Israel pursued a law of righteousness and did not arrive at the law. The essentially external character of the holiness pursued by Israel is brought out. The expression of the Apostle is not that Israel pursued righteousness, but that they pursued a *law* of righteousness. They pursued a law that might yield righteousness. What they pursued was an external thing—a law, a rule of conduct. The idea of righteousness in the Jewish mind was that of a prize to be won by a system of works. It was to the winning of this prize that they gave themselves. The consequence was that they failed to reach what they aimed at; and, furthermore, the righteousness of faith was so diametrically opposed to the whole trend of their thought upon the subject of righteousness that, on account of the unconquerable prejudice which it engendered in their minds, it was rejected by them—they failed to lay hold of that also.

The cause of Israel's failure, therefore, lay in the method of their pursuit. They sought righteousness, not by faith, but by works.

Paul sees fit to pause, in the course of his discussion, as he had done at 9: 1-5, to express his great interest in his people. He must have felt that it was a subject of peculiar delicacy; and he wished to leave no room for doubt that, while his doctrine excluded unbelieving Israel from the Messianic salvation, this exclusion was a matter that gave him great pain. He assures them that he prays for their salvation (10: 1).

He is acquainted with their zeal for God. But that zeal is not according to knowledge. He himself had once been possessed of a like zeal, when he thought he was serving his God in efforts to destroy the religion of Jesus of Nazareth. Being ignorant of God's righteousness (that is, ignorant of the divine righteousness offered in Christ, upon which justification is based), they seek to establish a justifying righteousness of their own; and hence they do not subject themselves to the righteousness divinely provided. They do not accept the truth that Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to those who believe.

Moses wrote that the man who doeth the righteousness which is of the Law shall live thereby. The righteousness of faith is an extension and interpretation of that teaching. Justification is not *won* by a painful process of *doing*, but it is *graciously granted to those who believe on Jesus Christ*.

That seems to be the general sense of what the Apostle says about ascending to heaven to bring Christ down, and descending into the abyss to bring Christ up from the dead. The idea seems to be that nothing remains to be *done* to make justification possible; that the only requisite now is to *believe*.

Paul personifies the "righteousness of faith" and seems to make it speak in contradiction of Moses; but the contradiction is only apparent. He does not mean that the Mosaic Law was a mechanical arrangement for the government of conduct. He, elsewhere in the Epistle, emphasizes the *spirituality* of the Law. Nor does he mean that the method of salvation was essentially different under the old dispensation from that of

the new. He did not mean that those saved under the old dispensation were not saved by grace, but by their own good works. None have ever been saved except by grace. That he did not mean to teach that the Law and grace are mutually exclusive is shown by the fact that the words which he here puts into the mouth of the "righteousness of faith" are an adaptation from Moses. He answers Moses with Moses, which indicates what was his real meaning. The Law of Moses is the standard of *life*. *Salvation* is of *grace*. Israel had taken the Law as teaching a method of salvation, a method of justification before God. Grace, the only possible method, was submerged, and was lost sight of in the consciousness of Israel. It was made by Jehovah to emerge upon the stage of history in the Christ. Thus had Jehovah expressed himself with regard to the Jewish perversion of the Law from its use as a standard of life to a method of justification; and so had Christ become the end of the Law for righteousness. In Christ, Jehovah was saying to Israel that they must give up the Law as a method of justification—not, however, as a standard of life.

The cause of Israel's exclusion from the Messianic kingdom the Apostle has lodged with Israel themselves. They are out because they have sought to establish a righteousness of their own, and for that reason, have declined to subject themselves to the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.

And, now, they are without excuse (10: 14-21).

There is no distinction in the Messianic kingdom between Jew and Gentile. According to this faith-justification, whosoever calls upon him will be saved. It is

true that they cannot call, unless they hear; nor can they hear without a preacher; nor can the preaching be done unless a preacher be sent.

There may, therefore, be an attempt to excuse Israel on the ground that they have not heard. But is it true that Israel have not heard? No! The story of Christ has been told wherever there are Jews. Paul uses the imagery used by the psalmist when he set forth in song the testimony of Nature to God. Wherever the messengers of the cross had gone, they had preached to the Jews first; and, when these would not believe, they turned to the Gentiles. Israel had heard; and no excuse could be made, on that ground, for their unbelief.

But, by way of excusing them, it might be urged that they did not understand. Was that true, then? Did Israel not know? Did they not understand? They certainly ought to have understood. It cannot be truthfully said that this method of justification, which allows nothing for blood relationship to Abraham, and which gives Gentiles an equal chance with Israelites, is so new and so strange in character that Israel may be excused for not taking it in. Against any such excuse is the testimony of their own Scriptures. First, see what Moses says: "I will provoke you to jealousy by that which is no nation; with a nation void of understanding will I anger you." Then see how bold is Isaiah: "I was found of them that sought me not; I became manifest unto them that asked not of me." But as to Israel he saith: "All the day long did I spread out my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."

Their Scriptures foreshadowed this very state of

things. It, therefore, cannot be said that such a state of things is so strange that they are excusable for not being able to understand it. If they would only compare the universality of this gospel of faith-justification, which places Jews and Gentiles on an equal footing, with the teaching of their own Scriptures, they would see that it is just what they ought to have been looking for, and would see that they ought to have been prepared to accept the righteousness of God which is by faith in Christ Jesus.

So Israel is without excuse. Their unbelief excludes them from the Messianic kingdom; and the blame for their unbelief lies at their own door.

Let it be observed that, if Paul placed himself, in chapter nine, at the viewpoint of God's sovereignty, he places himself, in chapter ten, at the viewpoint of human freedom. There he taught God's right to elect, for his own purposes and according to his own good pleasure; and he taught that God actually does so! Here, on the other hand, he teaches man's freedom, and consequent responsibility. These two facts—divine sovereignty and human freedom—Paul does not attempt to reconcile. To attempt to reconcile them lay outside of the sphere of his object. He has taught both. We are to accept both. We know that both are true. We know this, as a matter of speculation and experience, as well as of revelation.

Chapter XXIII

REJECTION PARTIAL AND TEMPORARY

II: I-36

We here come to both the last chapter of the great doctrinal division of the Epistle, and the last chapter of the third group of chapters.

As we have seen the exclusion of Israel from the Messianic kingdom and salvation is the subject of the third group of chapters of the Epistle. God's sovereign freedom in relation to that exclusion has been discussed by the Apostle in 9: 1-29; the cause of the exclusion has been discussed in 9: 30—10: 21; and now, in chapter eleven, the *partial* and *temporary* character of the exclusion is unfolded. The exclusion is only *partial* (verses 1-10). God has not cast off his people *in toto*. Two facts are appealed to by the Apostle in support of this affirmation.

First, Paul himself is a Hebrew; and yet he is a member of the Messianic kingdom, and a partaker of the Messianic salvation.

Second, There is a "remnant according to the election of grace." The time of Elijah was one of great apostasy from Jehovah; insomuch that the rugged prophet grew very despondent, and declared that he alone was left to serve Jehovah. But Jehovah rebuked his despondency, by assuring him that there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Even

so, says Paul, there is now a remnant according to the election of grace. It is true that the mass of Israel are out of the kingdom of Messiah, on account of their unbelief; but, on the other hand, there is a "remnant" who have accepted the Christ and are saved.

The mass sought righteousness in their own way; the "remnant" accepted what Jehovah offered them. The result is that the "remnant" are saved, while the mass are blinded; and this last is in accordance with the word of their own Scriptures, as, for example, Isaiah 29: 10; Deuteronomy 29: 4; and Psalm 69: 22.

This exclusion of Israel from the Messianic kingdom is only *temporary*. Partial it is, and also temporary (verses 11-32). God hath not cast off his people forever.

Their fall has brought salvation to the Gentiles. That is the Apostle's teaching. "By their fall," he says, "salvation is come unto the Gentiles."

What now does he mean? Certainly not that salvation was intended only for Israel, and that, if Israel had accepted the salvation offered to them, the Gentiles would have been left out and lost.

We know that it was his custom, wherever he went, to preach the gospel to Jews first, and when they would not believe to offer it to Gentiles. That was probably along with other possible reasons, in pursuance of a divine plan according to which Israel would have an opportunity to take the Gentile apostolate; that is to say, as converted Israel, they would carry the gospel to the Gentile world. Now it cannot be forgotten that almost everywhere he went he was opposed by Judaizing teachers—Jews who claimed to be disciples of Christ, but

who taught that Gentiles must become Jews ceremonially in order to become Christians. If Israel had accepted the gospel at that time and had become the Apostle to the Gentiles, would not their apostolate have been a Judaizing one? Would not the Gentiles have been taught that they must come into the Messianic kingdom through the gateway of Judaism? And would that not have prevented the Gentiles from accepting the gospel? Would it not have, at least, delayed the salvation of the Gentile world?

But Gentiles must not, on account of this situation, indulge pride (verses 16-22). If they see the natural branches broken off and withered and themselves occupying the place of favor and blessing from which those branches have been broken, they may be tempted to be proud; but an attitude of holy fear is more becoming.

The question of the possibility that an individual should so fall away as to be lost is not here brought forward by the Apostle's discussion. He is speaking not of *individuals* but of *peoples*.

If any one should choose to contend that, though he is speaking of peoples, yet he brings to view a *principle* that may be applied to individuals as truly as to peoples, it might be said in reply:

First, that this is not always true. It may be true of a principle in one aspect of it, and not in another. For example, take the principle of divine election. The fact that God elected Israel to enjoy certain special favors, as a people, relieves the doctrine of the divine election of certain individuals to eternal salvation of any

charge of injustice; for, if it is *unjust* to elect to eternal salvation, it is unjust to elect to special temporal favors; but God cannot be unjust, and yet, *as a fact*, he did elect Israel to special favors, and, therefore, injustice cannot be brought forward as an argument against a doctrine of election of certain individuals to eternal salvation. But, on the other hand, the rejection of Israel, or any other people, because that people does not continue to meet conditions upon which the special favor of any sort is promised, does not prove that all *individuals* have failed to keep the conditions in the past, or will fail to keep them in the future.

Secondly, it might be said that, even if the Apostle were speaking of individuals, it would not follow that he was teaching the possibility of final apostasy in the matter of eternal salvation. The exhortations and warnings of Scripture do not mean that, as we have had occasion before to observe.

Israel will finally be restored (verses 23-32). The *time* will be when the fulness of the Gentiles is come (verse 25). There will be a general turning of the Gentiles to Christ. The elder brother, Israel, will thus be provoked to accept the Father's offer of mercy; and there will be a general turning of Jews to Christ; and these, in turn, will give fresh impulse to the gospel among the Gentiles. The *pledge* of the restoration of Israel is to be found in the Old Testament Scriptures, as, for example, Isaiah 59:20; 27:9. The *means* of the restoration will be the general turning of the Gentiles to Christ (verse 31).

All this has been revealed to the Apostle. It was one

of the "mysteries" (verse 25) of the divine Counsel—something that was veiled, and, if known to men, must be unveiled; that is, divinely revealed.

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!" With exclamation of wonder and adoration does the Apostle close this first great division of his marvelous discussion.

B. PRACTICAL DIVISION
LIFE OF THE SAVED

12—16



PART VI
THE IDEAL CHRISTIAN

12: 1—15: 13



Chapter XXIV

NOT CONFORMED BUT TRANSFORMED

12: 1, 2

In the preceding eleven chapters of this great Epistle, Paul has been discussing the subject of salvation in its doctrinal aspect. "The mercies of God," as they have been brought out in that discussion, he now takes as his argument for consecration on the part of those to whom he is writing—an argument which applies, of course, to all Christians. It is as if he had said: In what I have written so far, you see how the mercy of God has been displayed in your salvation; and now by that mercy, I exhort you to consecrate yourselves to him.

Observe the particular form of the consecration of their *bodies*—"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service." Why their bodies? We are accustomed to think of the mind, the heart, the soul as that which, above all, should be consecrated to God; and that is a proper way to think of the matter. If the spiritual part of a man is truly consecrated, so also will the body be consecrated. No Scripture writer saw that more clearly or emphasized it more strongly than Paul. But, in this particular passage, he is not approaching the

subject in that way. In the end, it comes to the same thing; but, as we wish now to look at the subject as he did, we shall follow the course of his thought.

It was the consecration of their bodies, then, that he here enjoined. The image in his mind was that of an altar and a sacrifice. He would have these Christian people to offer to God their bodies, as a sacrifice is offered on an altar. A sacrifice on an altar is devoted to a sacred use—it is consecrated; and, in like manner, they were to devote their bodies to a sacred use, and thus to consecrate them. This consecration was to be once for all, as is shown by the form of the Apostle's language.

In this exhortation Paul views the body as the instrument of the soul. As the soul is the seat, or source, of moral evil, so the body is the instrument by which the evil of the soul is made manifest and effective. The body is the instrument by which evil thoughts and feelings are converted into evil words and deeds.

"By the mercies of God," then, these Christians are exhorted to consecrate their bodies, once for all, to God.

Having done that, they are not to be conformed to this world or age. Since it is the body that the Apostle has exhorted them to consecrate, we must understand the conformity which he disapproves to refer to *conduct*. The injunction is often understood to have reference to the inner spiritual life, as well as to conduct. To be sure, one's spiritual life ought not to be conformed to the spirit and opinion of the world any more than his conduct. But the reference here is only to conduct. That is clear from the fact that it

is the body which these people are exhorted to consecrate, the body being the representative and instrument of conduct.

Their conduct was not to be conformed to this world. To express the Apostle's idea more accurately, their conduct was not to be fashioned after the world's model of conduct. What does that mean?

(1) It certainly does not mean that a Christian man is to avoid everything in the shape of conduct that is practised by people who are not Christians. It does not mean that I am to adopt a course of conduct different in every particular from the conduct of every ungodly man. Such a view of Paul's teaching would be utterly indefensible. It would surround us with obstacles insurmountable. Ungodly men eat; therefore, Christian men must not eat! Ungodly men sleep; therefore, Christians must not sleep! Ungodly men learn to read; therefore, Christians must not learn to read. Ungodly men sometimes sing; therefore, Christians must not sing! Needless to go further in that line, to show how preposterous it would be to suppose that, in order to avoid fashioning his conduct after the world's model, the Christian must avoid everything that is practised by ungodly men.

But, though that position may at a glance be seen to be preposterous, yet the question is not settled as to what it is to fashion one's conduct after the model of the world. If, for example, we take up the question of amusements, we immediately see how much the question is in the fog. Some one will say that Christians should not engage in a certain amusement because it is a "worldly amusement." That way of treating the

matter ignores the fact that a thing may be worldly in a good sense as well as in a bad sense; and, to brand any course of conduct as wrong by calling it "worldly," is to "beg the question." It is as unreasonable as to give a dog what you regard as a bad name, and then shoot him as a bad dog because he has a bad name! We cannot properly say a thing is worldly in a bad sense, until we have in some other way determined that it is wrong. We cannot settle the rightness or wrongness of any amusement, then, by calling it "worldly." All the amusements that are commonly called "worldly" may be wrong, so far as the discussion, at this point, is concerned. That is not the point. Whether they are right or wrong cannot be determined by giving them a name. That must be determined in some other way. As it is with amusements, so it is with kinds of business one may engage in; and so it is with any line of conduct whatsoever. The character thereof cannot be determined by calling it "worldly." We must first show that it is wrong before we can characterize it as worldly in a bad sense.

(2) Let us see whether we may not find the key to the problem. The question is: What must be the character of any conduct of any sort whatsoever to entitle it to be regarded as worldly in the sense that it is in accordance with what Paul would call the world's model of conduct? The key is furnished by what immediately follows the exhortation against conformity to the world. These Christians were to be *transformed*—and for what? That they might discern the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Their discerning the will of God was thus brought into close relation to

their not fashioning their conduct after the world's model. The will of God then is seen to be the model that is set over against the world's model; and the exhortation really means that the conduct of Christians should differ from that of ungodly men at every point where the latter is out of harmony with the will of God.

Here, now, are the two models—the Christian's model and the world's model. The world says: I will do what suits me—what suits me is the model according to which I will fashion my conduct. The Christian, on the other hand, according to this teaching of the Apostle, must say: I will do whatever I find to be well—pleasing to God, and will avoid what will displease him—his will shall be my model; if what suits me is in accord with his will, I will do what suits me, but, if what suits me is not in accord with his will, I will not do what suits me.

God's will is to guide us. By his will we are to settle all questions of conduct. Let the question be one of amusement, or business, bring it right here for settlement. You can never decide whether it is worldly in the bad sense, until you have decided whether it is contrary to God's will. To be contrary to his will is the only bad sense in which any sort of conduct can be worldly. Whenever one departs from the will of God, exactly then he is fashioning his conduct according to the world's model—exactly then he is going contrary to Paul's injunction, "Be not conformed to this world."

There now inevitably arises the question: How may we determine what is the will of God? The Apostle does not leave us without an answer to that question.

The answer is involved in the words: "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."

The Apostle's choice of language here is most interesting. In the two words commonly rendered "conformed" and "transformed" he observes a distinction that makes his meaning as clear as noonday. He makes the same distinction in the second chapter of Philippians. He is there speaking of the disposition of our Lord in his coming from heaven to earth to save men. He says that our Lord, "existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped." The word by which Paul there expresses the idea that Jesus, the Christ, had existed "in the form of God" is the same, in root meaning, as the one he here uses to express transformation, when he says, "Be ye transformed." Of course he did not mean that Christ was in the "form" of God in the sense of bodily form. The reference is to character, nature. In the same passage, further on, he says that Christ was made in the likeness of men, and "being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself." When he says our Lord was found "in fashion as a man," he refers to the outward, bodily shape. So here he uses language carrying the same distinction. When he says, "Be not conformed to this age," he uses the word which means "to fashion," and refers to what is outward—in this case, to conduct. When, on the other hand, he says, "Be ye transformed," he uses the word which refers to character, inward nature, rather than to outward form.

We are to be transformed (that is, changed internally) so that we may discern the will of God, and so be

able to make our conduct what it ought to be, and so also to be able to avoid being conformed to this world—so be able to fashion our conduct according to the Christian's model instead of the world's model.

To know the will of God, then, we must be transformed by the renewing of the mind. We must be transformed; and the transformation must consist in the renewing of our minds. Our minds have been darkened by sin. We know not how clear they might have been, if there had never been any sin in the world. The mists and clouds and darkness that often hang between our minds and a clear knowledge of God's will have all been put there by sin that entered the world in Eden. If we are to be able to discern the will of God more clearly, our minds must be renewed. That is the transformation which must take place. The question arises, at once, as to how that transformation is to be effected.

The form of the Apostle's language shows that we are to do something to bring about the transformation. He says: "Be ye transformed." There is an injunction. The transformation is something in which we have a part to perform; and the injunction implies and makes certain that if we perform our part the transformation will be effected.

What are we to do? Simply meet the conditions of God's renewing grace. The expression "conditions of grace" is used in preference to "means of grace." This is done because "conditions" seems to lay more stress upon the divine operation in the renewal and to eliminate more completely any idea that a man may, by the use of any instrument, procure or effect the re-

newal. What are the conditions of grace suited to the renewing of our minds? In a general way, we may say that they lie in two classes. They have reference to truth and prayer.

(1) The truth of God must be sought and cherished. That truth is found in his Word. Read it. Read it again. Have it laid up in mind and heart in rich abundance. His truth is found, also, in preaching. Preaching is worth nothing except as it has the truth of God in it. Hear God's word preached; and get all you can out of the preaching. God's truth, further, is to be found in the lives of his saints. Every true Christian incarnates some truth of God, and his life may contribute to the transformation of others.

Let every Christian be sure to get as much of the truth of God as is possible from every source open to him. The more he knows of that truth the more likely his spiritual discernment will be sharpened, and the more readily and clearly will he be able to know the will of God.

(2) There must be the habit of prayer. That is the habit of communion with God. If you have much close communion with a friend, you will learn more of his spirit, and so will know more of his will; and, besides, he will disclose more of his purposes to you than he would if you held only occasional interviews with him. So it is between us and God. The more we commune with him, the more we shall know of his Spirit, the more of his Spirit he will put in us, the more we shall be brought into sympathy with him, and so, the more we shall be able to discern his will, and the more he will reveal to us. We must be sure to commune

much with the Heavenly Father, if we would acquire the power to discern his good and acceptable and perfect will, if we would be transformed, if we would be able to fashion our conduct after that model instead of the world's model.

Chapter XXV

THE BELIEVER IN SOCIAL RELATIONS

12: 3-21

As was stated in the Preface, and as has become apparent in the treatment of the Epistle so far, the purpose in this book is not to deal with details, but to proceed along general lines of exposition. Accordingly, this chapter will not dwell upon the items, in severalty, of the section of the Epistle upon which it is based, but will endeavor to set forth the two controlling ideas. These two ideas are yielded by verses three and nine; and the two ideas are self-possessing and self-giving. The connection between the two ideas is the importance of self-giving of self-possessing. Without possession there can be no giving.

The first of these ideas, self-possessing, is suggested by the first of our key words, in verse three: "So to think as to think soberly." The Apostle here introduces the idea of limitation. He would not have these Christians to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, to overestimate their abilities, and so to aspire to a rôle of which they were not capable. On the contrary, he would have them to take the proper estimate of their endowments, and to act accordingly. The gift divinely bestowed upon a man is the measure of his responsibility, and ought to set the limit for his aspiration.

It may be readily seen what is implied in the self-possessing here set forth by the Apostle. Just two things are implied; and the first of these is self-knowledge.

A man is not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think. That means that he is to take his own measure correctly. It means that he is to know his gifts, and, of course, along with the gifts, his weaknesses also. In a word, he is to know himself.

Very little reflection is needed to see that a man cannot possess himself unless he knows himself. He who is ignorant as to the measure and the kind of ability he has, cannot be said to have himself in hand, or to possess himself. He finds it impossible to make the best use of himself, just because he does not know himself. That is not strange. The same is true with regard to his use of anything else, a machine, for example. If he does not know the machine, he cannot use it to the best advantage—he may indeed be unable to use it at all. Similarly, his use of a force, or agent of Nature, is in proportion to his knowledge of it. He could not use electricity unless he knew something about it; and his use of it is in proportion to his knowledge of it—not knowledge of its essence, maybe, but of its action. Edison has been able so marvelously to harness it up, because he has studied it so much and knows so much about it.

In like manner, a man's possession of himself and his consequent ability to use himself must be in proportion to his knowledge of himself. It is quite certain that many men engage in laudable undertakings and fail, simply because they do not know themselves. For

lack of knowledge of themselves, they undertake what is far above their capacity, or what requires a different order of ability, though no higher than theirs. And, again, it is quite as certain that many men are failing to undertake what they ought to undertake, and failing for the same reason; namely, that they do not know themselves—they underestimate their capacity. What needs, therefore, to be emphasized here is the importance of self-knowledge. Know thyself! Do not be afraid of knowing. It is best that you should know. If you have too high an estimate of yourself, it will do you good to have your estimate properly lowered. To have it lowered may save you from undertaking some things which you ought not to undertake, and in which you would fail, or it may save you from a conceit from which you ought to wish very earnestly to be saved. On the other hand, if you have too low an estimate of yourself, it will be well to have that corrected. So you will be led to undertake greater things.

The other matter implied in the self-possessing set forth by Paul is self-control.

One of the strange delusions of sin is that license is liberty. If Satan can have his way with a man, the man is made to believe that he is free. When God's blessed will is set aside, and the passions are vaulted into the saddle, the man thinks that now he is in full possession of himself. But wait! The time will come when that delusion will be gone. A famous literary man, when he waked out of a dream of freedom to find himself bound hand and foot by one passion to which he had given rein, uttered this piteous wail: "The waters have gone over me. But out of the black

depths, could I be heard, I would cry out to all those who have set foot in the perilous flood. Could the youth to whom the flavor of the first wine is delicious as the opening scenes of life, or the entering of some newly discovered paradise, look into my desolation and be made to understand what a dreary thing it is when he shall feel himself going down a precipice with open eyes and a *passive will*; to see his destruction and have no *power to stop it*; to see all goodness emptied out of him, and yet not able to forget a time when it was otherwise; to bear about the piteous spectacle of his own ruin; could he see my fevered eye, fevered with last night's drinking, and feverishly looking for to-night's repetition of the folly; could he but feel the body of death out of which I cry hourly *with feeble outcry* to be delivered—it were enough to make him dash the sparkling beverage to the earth in all the pride of its mantling temptation."

What a doleful, piteous, despairing wail is that from a man who when he first gave rein to his passion thought he was walking a freeman in a paradise, but who, at the last, realized that he was bound and driven down a precipice with no power to stop short of destruction! Testimonies might be multiplied. It is not necessary. This one is typical, and illustrates the truth that *license is not liberty*, that to give rein to the passions is not the way to gain possession of self. Does any man thus gain possession of himself? Nay, verily! It is only by pursuing the opposite course that any man ever did or even can gain possession of himself. It is by self-control, and not by self-abandonment, that this possession is achieved. Does not any one know

that a man loses power just in proportion as he loses self-control? Do not his powers go to waste in proportion as his passions hold sway? Is not the holding of himself in hand in such a way as to be used to the best advantage in any direction dependent upon self-control?

These two items, then, self-knowledge and self-control, are implied in the self-possessing that is suggested by the key word: "So to think as to think soberly." The word "self-possession," as it is commonly used, carries with it both these ideas. When we speak of the self-possession of a man we speak of a characteristic that roots itself in both self-knowledge and self-control. "Self-possession" in an orator, for example, indicates that he understands himself as knowing his subject, and it indicates the control of himself that will not allow anything like timidity to defeat his purpose. Such self-possession is necessary to the best use of himself as a speaker.

Thus we are brought to the second controlling idea of the Apostle in our passage. It is self-giving. One is to possess himself in order that he may give himself; and self-giving is the all-inclusive duty of the Christian in his social relations. This second idea (that is, self-giving) is suggested by our second key word: "Let love be without hypocrisy."

The idea is that the love must be pure. "Let love be without hypocrisy, you (on your part) abhorring what is evil, cleaving to what is good." That is to say, your love should be so pure that it will abhor evil, though found in your best friend (or yourself),

and will applaud good, though it be found in your worst enemy.

Where love so pure as that exists, there will be self-giving. Such love cannot fail to move to self-giving; and the Apostle goes on to the end of this passage, dealing with a number of details in which the self-giving that grows out of love is to be manifested. Those details fall into two general groups, showing two general lines along which the self-giving runs.

One of these is sympathy. The verse which, upon the face of it, most plainly sets forth that feature of self-giving is verse fifteen: "Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep."

It may be asked: How is sympathy self-giving? Any difficulty of seeing how may be due to a wrong conception of sympathy. Does everybody, for example, who weeps at the house of death sympathize with those who have been bereaved? By no means, as a rule. There are people who weep when they see others weeping, even though they do not enter into the feelings of the others. They cannot refrain from weeping. The tears just will come. So also it is with laughter. Some people laugh when others laugh, though they may see nothing at which to laugh. They are so constituted. But sympathy is entering into the feelings of others, and feeling with them. Though your feelings would normally be those of sorrow, you enter into the joys of others, and try, as far as possible, to make them feel that their pleasure is yours; and though your feelings would normally be those of joy, you enter into the sorrow of others, as far as possible, making their sorrow

yours. That is sympathy; and that is self-giving. It is putting yourself, as nearly as possible, out of your own case and into the case of others. That is a very different thing from simply weeping when others weep, just because the sight of tears makes yours flow; or from laughing when others laugh, just because you cannot refrain.

The other general line along which self-giving runs is service. The words in our passage in which this idea most clearly emerges are found in verse thirteen: "Communicating to the necessities of the saints."

The particular matter which the Apostle here had in mind was material aid, to be extended by the church at Rome to their own needy ones and the needy of other churches, especially of the church at Jerusalem. This idea of material aid, however, easily opens out into the larger idea of service of any kind to other people.

Look, now, at these two things together—sympathy and service! And these root themselves in love! And they constitute the self-giving to others that is required of those who have been justified by the bestowment of the righteousness of God for unrighteous men, those who are saved by grace through faith.

Do you sympathize with those who are burdened? Those to whom life is on hard conditions? Those whom the battle of life seems to be going against? Do you ever think about them, and try to realize how hard is their lot in life? And do you so feel for them that you long to make it all easier for them?

But here is something that is harder, something in which self-giving is more difficult. Do you sympa-

thize with those who seem to be getting on better than yourself? Instead of being envious, do you try to realize how pleasant it is to them to be getting on well and so enter into their feelings that you rejoice with them? You ought to have love enough to do even that, difficult as it is.

Are you ready to serve those who have claim upon your Christian service? The description "those who have claim upon your Christian service" is used with discrimination. To serve some people in some ways would be to ruin them; and that would not be pleasing to the Lord. We are to serve with wisdom. The Lord does not wish his people to be fools in his work. He wishes them to act wisely; and he is ready to give them the wisdom they need. The question at issue right now is as to willingness to serve. Are you willing? Willing to do such service as the Lord will approve? There is much insincerity and unwillingness hidden under the plea of a lack of merit in the cause that is to be served. It is well illustrated in the story of the man who told his son that when he wished to refuse to give to any cause he should object to the *plan*. Let us remember that the Lord is not deceived by subterfuges. The simple question is: Are we who have been saved by his grace willing to serve in such ways as the Master would approve? If we are, the other questions can be easily settled. We shall in that case be directed to proper persons and proper causes for the bestowment of our aid.

That is the missionary spirit. It is the spirit of Christ. It is self-giving. You are willing to help others by putting yourself directly and indirectly into

their lives. If you can do so directly by supplying their lack out of what you have, you do that; and, if you cannot thus directly and personally serve them, you do so indirectly by the use of your means, sending others to do what you cannot personally do, and, in that way, linking yourself to others in a blessed fellowship of service.

Chapter XXVI

THE BELIEVER IN CIVIC RELATIONS

13: 1-10

Believers must not be conformed to the world, but must be transformed by a progressive spiritual renewal. That is the general, inclusive obligation resting upon every one who has become a partaker of God's grace in justification, as set forth in the great doctrinal division of this Epistle. That obligation has a negative and a positive bearing. In the first place, believers must not be conformed to the world—their conduct must not be fashioned after the world's model of conduct. In the second place, there must be a progressive change in their inner life—a change that will enable them to discern the will of God, which is henceforth to be the model of their conduct.

The believer sustains relations with other people. It could not be otherwise. He is in the world, though he is not of it. "I pray," said Jesus to the Father, "not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the Evil one." The obligations of Christians in the world to all men are summed up in the one category of self-giving, the necessary condition of which is self-possessing.

But, along with this world-wide aspect of the individual believer's social relations, there is another inevitable phase of those relations. It is the necessity of

civil government. The Apostle does not fail to deal with that subject. Paul here, clearly and without qualification, lays down the general proposition that civil government is of God. Men cannot live together without government. Civil government, therefore, arising out of the very necessities of the social life of men, must be regarded as an institution of God. Paul goes even further with his statement. He says: "There is no power but of God." No power! Whatever form of government you may be living under is of God; and to resist is to withstand the ordinance of God, and the resistance will be punished. Furthermore, as a consequence, he says that officers of government are ordained of God and believers must render submission to the officers.

We must undertake to discover what the Apostle meant. Did he mean to lay down a doctrine of universal submission by Christians to just any sort of government that may be forced upon them, without any regard to the justice of that government? The Christians to whom he was writing, and all Christians of that time, were living under the government of Imperial Rome, Nero, one of the worst emperors of all ages, being then on the throne. Did Paul mean to say that Imperial Rome was of God, and that all her officers from Nero down were ordained of God? And did he mean to say that, therefore, such government should never anywhere or at any time be resisted upon pain of divine punishment?

That could not have been his meaning. In the first place, his words in this very section of the Epistle show that his conception of civil government is that of

an institution whose purpose is to cause justice to prevail—"Rulers are not a terror to the good work but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same." Those words clearly indicate that Paul was looking at civil government, in its ideal form—as God would have it. In the second place, in this same section, he brings submission into relation to conscience—"Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake." For conscience' sake! "In assigning conscience as a ground for obedience the Apostle in the very act is indirectly tracing the limits of the obedience." (Goded.) In the third place, to attribute the doctrine in question to Paul would be to put him out of harmony with apostolic example. Peter and his associates laid down a great, universal principle when they justified disobedience to the Sanhedrin by saying that they must obey God rather than men. They must obey God rather than men! To obey God in that instance required them to disobey men, though those men were allowed a certain authority by Rome. Paul's own chains, worn after he wrote this Epistle, were an eloquent denial of the absolute right of government to command, and the unqualified obligation of individuals to obey.

The righteousness of revolution, or of changes in government, even through violence, is not under discussion at this place by Paul. That revolution might sometimes be right could hardly be denied in the face of what Jesus said: "I came not to send peace, but a sword." To his disciples he said: "Peace I leave with you; my peace give I unto you; not as the world giveth,

give I unto you." When we place those two sayings alongside of each other we get from the Great Teacher the following conception: He is the Prince of Peace, and will bring universal peace to a sin-distracted world; as men come under his personal reign in their hearts, they come into possession of the peace of God which passeth all understanding and which the world can neither give nor take away; meantime, he has given to the world principles of truth and righteousness which, incarnated in human beings, will come into conflict with principles of evil, incarnated in human beings, and so there will be unceasing war between the cohorts of Christ and the cohorts of Satan, until Christ shall reign in perfect and universal peace.

Though the righteousness of revolution and of changes in government, even by violence, was not the subject here under discussion by Paul, yet we must hold that what he meant to teach does not preclude revolution and change. There is a vital sense in which God ordains the setting up of civil government and the breaking down of such governments. He ordained, for example, the government of Israel; and he also raised up the fierce Assyrian and the luxurious Babylonian to bring his people into subjection to the pagan world for chastisement. All the changes in the governments of the world came within the range of the universal and eternal sovereignty of God. Through the ceaseless mutations there is running one grand and glorious and changeless divine purpose; and all the forces of righteousness, which surely must include God's own Redeemed, have their place assigned them in the mighty progress onward and upward. His people are to stand

in the places he assigns them, and do their part in the spirit of their great Captain.

Coming back to the question as to what Paul meant in this passage, we shall be helped if we consider what he wrote to Timothy, as follows: "I exhort, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men; for kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity" (1 Tim. 2:1,2). By the side of that passage we might place some of Peter's words: "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil doers and for praise to them that do well. For so is the will of God, that by well doing ye should put to shame the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Pet. 2:23-25). As a matter of fact, all Christians in that day were living within the domain of the Roman Empire. They had come into the kingdom of Christ within the borders of that Empire. They could not escape from the iron ring within which they had been born into natural life, and within which they had been born again. The immensely practical question was as to how they should live the new life amid the old surroundings. They might be factious and rebellious, or they might be orderly and obedient. In the former case, they would regard the civil government under which they were living as altogether a work of Satan, an intolerable infliction of evil, and an enemy to be relentlessly opposed. Such a course would entirely overlook the great truth that God's hand was even in the Roman government, holding it, and guiding it towards

the working out of his great purpose in the world. It would fail to see that factiousness and rebellion would not commend the new Spiritual Empire of which they were members. It would also bring baneful strife and tragic suffering to them. In the latter case, they would be considering the civil government under which they were living as, for the present at least, the divine order for them and as calling for quiet and orderly lives on their part. Such a course would best commend the new way to the unbelieving pagans, and would bring least suffering to themselves. Though they should thus live, persecutions might come. If so, they could only hold fast their profession and patiently endure.

The Christian ideal of civil government is an institution based upon just principles, conducted through just agencies, and directed to just ends. Any civil government which falls short of that ideal cannot be said to have the entire approval of God. All governments must progress towards that ideal, or they will eventually fall. All Christians should lend the full force of their influence and example to the establishment of such government. In popular governments, where representatives of the governed make and administer the laws, there can be but one right attitude and practice on the part of Christian citizens; and that is scrupulous obedience to all the laws. To pursue any other course is to contribute to the prevalence of lawlessness, to the breaking down of government, to the bringing in of anarchy. "Render to all their dues," says the Apostle; and in their connection those words mean that a Christian citizen should perform all his civic duties conscientiously. Let all Christians do that;

then, in any land that is predominantly Christian, civil government will approach the Christian ideal.

The Apostle closes this section of his Epistle with a general exhortation for that justice upon which the ideal government rests: "Owe no man anything, save to love one another." To love is an unceasing obligation. It is a debt that can never be fully paid. He, therefore, could not say that they must not owe love. But that was the only abatement to his exhortation. They must fully meet every other obligation, if they would exemplify the true standard of justice; they must liquidate every other debt; they must do full justice to all men. The royal highway to that accomplishment is to fulfill the second table of the Law; and that is accomplished when one loves his neighbor as himself.

Chapter XXVII

THE PAROUSIA AS AN INCITEMENT TO VIGILANT CHRISTIAN LIFE

13: 11-14

The consecrated life, the life not conformed to the world's model of conduct but transformed by inward renewal, has been set in social and civic relations with appropriate instructions and exhortations. Now the Apostle adds a special incentive to vigilant Christian living. It is in the Parousia, or Second Coming of the Saviour.

But is it the Parousia to which he refers when he says: "Now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed; the night is far spent and the day is at hand"?

It does not seem possible to answer that question with entire confidence. The language is too brief and too general. If he had said more, even though the language were general, we might interpret it with greater assurance; or, if the language were less general in character, we might be certain of his meaning, brief as it is. It is, doubtless, true that the preponderance of opinion is in favor of understanding the Apostle to have in mind the Parousia. What did Paul know about the approach of the Parousia? Did he know when it would occur? That question we may answer without hesitation. The words of Christ plainly teach

that neither Paul nor the seer of Patmos nor anybody else would know. Nor is there anything in any of Paul's writings, preserved to us, that indicates that he thought he knew when that august event would occur.

Did Paul think it probable that the Parousia would occur during his generation and so might be said to be at hand? Some of his writings seem to indicate that he did. "The time is shortened, that henceforth both those that have wives may be as though they had none, etc." (1. Cor. 7:29). "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51). It may be, of course, that "we" in this passage was intended to be general and apply to living Christians in the day of the Parousia centuries after the passage was written. That, however, is not the most natural interpretation. "The Lord is at hand" (Philippians 4:5). "We that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep" (1 Thess. 4:15). The same remark may be made about the "we" in this passage that was made above on "we" in the Corinthian passage.

Other Scripture writers, as Peter and John and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, used language very similar to that of Paul, which seems to indicate that expectancy of the speedy return of the ascended Christ was a common frame of mind among the early Christian teachers. "The end of all things is at hand" (1 Pet. 4:7).

It must be remembered that it was a characteristic of God's revelation by prediction that the certainty of an event might be revealed while the time of it was concealed. So it was with the Parousia. The certainty

of it was revealed with the most reassuring clearness and fulness; but the time of it was concealed with a most inscrutable veil of mystery.

But Paul knew, beyond a peradventure, that the meeting with Christ upon the part of himself and the Roman Christians would in any event be soon. However long the final coming of Christ might be deferred, *their* meeting with him could not fail to be an early one. The thing for them, therefore, was to be vigilant.

The importance of this, the Apostle puts in a most striking way. The night is far spent. The day approaches. Those who have been sleeping are now beginning to awake. They should throw off any remaining stupor; doff the apparel of night; don the apparel of day; live the life of the day; and be prepared to meet guests who may come. So Christians must shake off any remaining stupor; must put off all deeds of darkness; must put on the works of day; and must be ready to meet the best and greatest Guest whenever he shall come.

Yes; the night apparel must be put off. We must walk becomingly or decently; for that is the meaning of the word rendered "honestly" in our thirteenth verse. The Apostle gives some particulars embraced in the opposite sort of walk, the walk that is not becoming or decent. He puts these particulars in three pairs of words:

1. *Reviling and drunkenness.* "Intemperance" might very well cover that pair. We are in the habit of limiting "intemperance" to intemperate drinking of intoxicants. That sort of intemperance is bad enough, to be sure; and it is worthy of being stigmatized as

"indecent." But there may be intemperance in speech, in eating, in right kinds of pleasure and pastimes, and even in our judgments. The Christian is to be "temperate in all things."

2. *Chambering and wantonness.* "Impurity" covers that pair. To guard against impurity of conduct one must guard against impurity of thought. Thought is the portal. Guard that door. Treat impure thoughts as burglars and murderers. Warn them away. If need be, take them by the throat and thrust them out. If the thoughts be kept pure, the words and deeds will be measurably safe.

3. *Strife and jealousy.* "Unamiableness" would probably cover all that is expressed by this pair of words, as used by Paul in our passage. The Christian, as he lives in contact with other people, will meet with occasions of strife and envy and jealousy and other such unamiable things that spring from unsanctified or uncontrolled desires. He must on all such occasions avoid unamiableness. He must do right; he must speak the truth and do the truth as he sees the truth; but he must never be unamiable in the manner of his speaking or acting.

In contrast and opposition to the unbecoming, indecent manner of life indicated by the particulars which the Apostle has enumerated, the day apparel—the deeds of light—are to be put on. That is summed up in this one thing: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof."

Put on Christ! He put on man that man might put on Christ. He took our nature and condition that we might take his character and disposition.

Put on Christ! "Christ in us" is our religion in principle; "Christ on us" is that religion in practice. "Christ in us" is the hidden source from which flows out the stream of our visible Christian living; "Christ on us" is that visible Christian living itself. "Christ in us" is our inner hidden Christian life; "Christ on us" is the outward manifestation of that inner hidden life. To put on Christ therefore is to do right and to do so from Christian motive.

Make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof! All bridges behind us are to be burnt. A Christian determining to live as Christ wants him to live must refuse to put himself in position to be tempted to live otherwise for one moment. Rising in the morning, determining that he will live throughout the day as Christ wants him to live and praying God to help him so to live, he must not voluntarily and without clear call of duty go where he knows he will be tempted to evil at a point at which he is especially liable to temptation.

What a psychologist was Paul! How well he knew the soul of man! How amazingly easy it is for us to be dishonest with ourselves! Reader, did you never undertake to "put on Christ Jesus" and at the same time "make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof"? Did you never try to put on the garments of day while holding on to the garments of night? Did you never try to plant one foot in the upward way while the other was left standing in the downward way?

Reverting to the question as to whether Paul in our passage had in mind the Second Coming of Christ, I may say that my own exegetical judgment is that he

did have that in mind. As stated above, the question cannot be settled. We may only base our judgment upon what seems to be a preponderance of probability. Doing that, I have placed my judgment in the heading to this chapter.

That Paul and Peter and John believed that the Parousia was at hand does not vitiate their authority as inspired teachers. They did not know when the Lord would come. He himself had said that no man knew; that the Father had left that in his own counsel. He had also said that his coming would be as a thief in the night—unexpected and unheralded. In all his references to it the only certainty, we might say, was the fact that he would come; and the one great uncertainty was the time of his coming. Upon the certainty of his coming and the uncertainty as to the time thereof, he based an admonition to “watch” and to “be ready.” It seems not surprising that his disciples should be imbued with the idea that “the time is short” and that “the Lord is at hand.” Nor is it out of harmony with a well-known feature of Old Testament prophecy; namely, the feature of foreshortening as to the time of the Advent of Messiah.

The Second Advent, the Parousia, as an incitement to vigilant Christian living! Jesus so used it. “Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is” (Mark 13:33). “Watch, therefore; for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh” (Matt. 24:42). “Be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 24:44). Peter so used it. “Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to

be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God" (2 Pet. 3: 11, 12). And Paul so used it. Besides the passage before us in Romans, see, for example, 1 Thessalonians 5: 4-6—"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief; for ye are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night, nor of darkness. So then let us not sleep, as do the rest; but let us watch and be sober."

In that same first Epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul, incidentally, gave a picture of the ideal Christian life, and one feature of the picture was waiting for the return of Christ to earth. "Ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1: 9, 10). Turning, serving, waiting—those are the three great features of the picture. "Turning from idols" meant turning from all that idols stood for in the pagan religion from which the Thessalonians had been converted. Idols stood for debased, corrupt, vicious life. To turn from idols meant to turn from sin in all its forms. This does not mean instant perfection; but it does mean a *break* with the old sinful life. The old life may sometimes allure; the old habits may shadow one; but that brings on a fight. "Old life! thine acquaintance I have cut; friendship with thee is broken off!" Such is the language of the new man in Christ Jesus. "To serve the living and true God" means the service of worship and the service of work. In the ideal Christian life there is place for private devotion and for public worship. The devout life is a life of communion with God. The spirit leans upon the bosom of the Great

Father. The heart is kept alongside of the heart of the precious and mighty Saviour. The devout man so lives that those who come nearest to him know that he companies with Jesus, is living in communion with Christ, and will not be among those who neglect "the assembling" of themselves together for worship with their brethren. In the ideal Christian life, there is place, also, for the service of work, as well as for the service of worship. There is what we call religious work. The man who lives in communion with Christ will do what he can to extend the kingdom of God in his own community and to the ends of the earth. There is, also, what we call secular work. The ideal Christian regards all his business as the Lord's work. He will not indulge in any pleasure which his Lord would not approve. He will engage in no business and pursue no methods with which he could not meet his Lord. "To wait for his Son from heaven" means to live in expectancy of the Second Coming of Christ. Such waiting, such expectancy, will encourage amid difficulties and trials, and will restrain and strengthen amid temptations and will keep one from becoming engrossed by the things of the world.

PART VII
A QUESTION OF CASUISTRY

14: 1—15: 13

Chapter XXVIII

LIVING OR DYING, THE LORD'S

14: 1-9

A question of casuistry was a source of some concern in the church at Rome. Two parties, holding different views, distinctly appear. Exactly who they were that constituted the party of the "weak" we are unable to determine. Were they certain Gentile Christians, who brought over some of the ideas of their philosophy? Or were they Jewish Christians of Esene or Ebionite tendency? It is impossible to say. Nor is it necessary to say. The issue is perfectly clear. This party of the "weak" were "vegetarians" and "Sabbatarians." The word "Sabbatarians" is used to designate those who observed "days" as sacred, whether the "day" was the Sabbath or some feast day. "One man hath faith to eat all things; but he that is weak eateth herbs"—that is, herbs only. He is a vegetarian. "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike."

The Apostle sets himself to compose the difficulty arising out of that situation. He proceeds upon the assumption and conviction that the issue does not involve any fundamental principle of the gospel which he preached. It is a matter of doctrinal indifference. A man might eat meat or not eat meat, and yet be a devout, consecrated, orthodox Christian. "He that

eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, unto the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks." Each one is persuaded that what he does is right for him, whether he eat meat or abstain from eating meat; and each one gives thanks to God, whether his meal contain meat or be composed solely of vegetables. Let the vegetarians, therefore, who constitute the smaller party, be gladly and heartily fellowshiped by the other and larger party, who believe that it is not wrong to eat meat. In like manner a man may be a devout, consecrated, orthodox Christian, and yet either observe "days" or not observe "days." A Jewish Christian with his ideas of the sanctity of the Sabbath and of feast days might act in accordance with his ideas on that subject without prejudice to his standing as a Christian. So, also, a Gentile Christian, bringing over some of the ideas of his Gentile philosophy with regard to the sanctity of certain days, might coalesce with the Jewish Christian in so far as to attach a special sanctity to certain Christian days or seasons, without prejudice to his standing as a Christian. And so, also, a man might regard all days as alike, so far as sanctity is concerned; that is to say, he might regard all days as alike sacred, without prejudice to his standing as a Christian.

The Apostle treats this issue in a manner quite similar to that in which in his first Corinthian Epistle he treated the eating of meat offered to idols. He regarded the eating of meat offered to idols and then sold for food as a matter of moral indifference. A man might eat or not eat meat offered to idols; but the Apostle there counsels not eating where eating might

lead others to eat in violation of their conscientious scruples.

From the particular case in the church at Rome, involving a question of casuistry, Paul rises in verses seven to nine of our passage to a general principle that may be relied upon to settle all such questions. "For none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living."

In these three verses three great facts are set forth; and they are knit together in a web of close argumentation.

1. The first fact is stated both negatively and positively. Succinctly put, it is this: None of us liveth to himself, but to the Lord; and none of us dieth to himself, but to the Lord.

None liveth to himself, but to the Lord. How is that true? It is true universally. No man can extricate himself from the all-embracing government of God. Every man is under that government, subject to its laws, whether he heartily accepts the fact or blindly ignores it. But Paul is speaking about Christians. In what sense is it true particularly of Christians that none liveth to himself but to the Lord? It is true in an ideal sense; in the sense that, according to the Christian ideal, one does not live to himself but to the Lord. Just in proportion as a man makes this ideal an actuality in his life is it true that he lives, not to himself but to the Lord.

We are familiar with what it is to live for another. A house is burning. Some one is to be rescued. Two men step forward. They are equally courageous. One has a family; the other has not. The man without family pushes the other aside, saying: "You have a family to live for and must not take this risk; I am going." A widow bowed down with sorrow and care would gladly die and be at peace and rest. But she thinks of her children and takes courage—she must live for them. So it is with the Christian. Said this same Apostle: "To me to live is Christ." When a man is converted all is surrendered to Christ. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The problem of consecration is hourly to realize, actualize what was actualized that day when at the feet of Christ he lay with all surrendered and his sins forgiven.

None dieth to himself, but to the Lord. How can that be true? A man has some choice in the case of his living. He may at least determine the manner of his life. But as to dying, what choice has he about that? How can he die for the Lord?

A boy is in the army, fighting for his country, for his mother, too. But he gets a furlough. He goes home. He goes home not only *to* mother but also *for* mother. So it is with the Christian. He is living for Christ. When he comes to die that also will be for Christ. He will go home, not only *to* Christ but also *for* Christ, not only to peace and joy and glory for himself in the presence of Christ but also for the joy of the Saviour. Christ and his people are one, and his soul will be fully satisfied only when he receives them to himself.

2. The second fact is an inference from the first:

"Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Living or dying we are his.

Living we are his. How sweet to be his! His to be cared for! Do your duty and he takes care of the rest. His to be protected! Trust him after shunning unnecessary peril and he will protect. With any temptation too great he will furnish a way of escape. His to be guided! His Word, his Spirit, his Providence—how strangely and how surely they combine to guide! His to be used! His and his alone; our own not at all; absolutely surrendered to him to be used according to his ever-gracious will!

Dying we are his. If anything is more solemn than living, it certainly is dying. How blessed to feel that we are his! Realizing that we are his may be depended upon to take the terror out of the coming of the Dark Angel. If dying we are his, we need not dread that hour. We are in the hands of him who loved us and gave himself for us. Nor need we suppose that the work of any of his servants is unfinished when the summons comes. Even dying they are his.

3. The third fact is that Christ died and rose again that he might have this Lordship of the living and the dying. Dying he redeemed us; he paid the price of Lordship; he purchased his right in us. We are blood-bought. His blood-mark is upon us. There is, therefore, upon us the greatest possible obligation to realize the Christian ideal of life. Rising he made secure his title to the property. Here is irrefragable evidence of Lordship, of ownership, of right to make and power to fulfil promises with regard to the property. A dead Christ would have no title. But the risen Christ

ascended to heaven bearing in his pierced hand the title which he holds. Joyfully recognizing his Lordship, we may earnestly and hopefully strive to make it real in our lives.

In what Paul says, verses five and six, of this passage of the Epistle, is implied his doctrine of the Sabbath. With his words there we may compare Galatians 4: 10, "Ye observe days and months and seasons and years; I am afraid of you lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain." Also Colossians 2: 16, "Let no man judge you, therefore, in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath day, which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is Christ's."

In the period of his apostolic ministry out of which came his Corinthian, Galatian, and Roman Epistles, Paul maintained a mighty conflict to set the gospel of Christ free from the bonds of Jewish legalism. He boldly taught that salvation is by grace through faith alone; and that all men, Jews and Gentiles, are on the same footing. The man in Christ Jesus is free from bondage to any ceremony of the Law. He may observe those ceremonies or not, without prejudice to his position and prospects as a Christian. The Jewish Sabbath, with all its minute demands and restrictions, fell into the category of things from which the Christian was loosed. With regard to that, the Christian stood in a position of freedom. He might choose to observe or not to observe. That was a part of his liberty in Christ. In the exercise of that liberty he must respect the liberty of all others. If they chose not to observe the Sabbath, while he did, he must not "judge" them;

or, if they chose to observe while he did not, he must, in that case, also not "judge" them.

It may properly be asked: Was Paul's doctrine of the Sabbath, that we should have no Sabbath at all? Nothing corresponding in any way to the Jewish Sabbath? Hardly. Paul doubtless held that all Christians should grasp the principles which underlay the Jewish Sabbath and which had become so overlaid with rabbinical accretions, and they should apply those principles in their lives.

It must be remembered that Christianity is a universal religion. It was not intended to be limited to any section of the earth's surface. All permanent Christian institutions must, therefore, be susceptible of universal adoption. That at once rules out the Jewish conception of the Sabbath. The idea of a particular section of time, a particular day of the week, as "sacred" above all other days, made the Jewish seventh day an impossibility as a universal institution on a spherical earth.

What were the principles underlying the Sabbath institution? To discover them it would seem that we must go back to the creation record in Genesis. I make no apology for accepting that as inspired of God, and correct in its teaching. What, then, were the principles underlying the Sabbath as there instituted? We shall hardly go amiss if we set them down as two: (1) physical recuperation; (2) spiritual edification. The Hebrew word "sabbath" means "rest," "cessation." In Genesis 2:2, 3 we read that God "rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made," and that he "blessed the seventh day and hallowed it

because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made." After the periods of creative activity, there came this period of cessation from such activity. In Exodus 20:8-11, Sabbath observance, as one of the Ten Commandments, is based upon the record in Genesis 2:2, 3. We have, then, what we may call the Creation or Universal Sabbath, and the Mosaic or Particularistic Sabbath based upon it. It does not, now, seem to me to be far-fetched if we say the design of the Sabbath, as gained from its origin, thus traced to the creation record, was to bind man to his Creator in order that he might not forget whence he came and to give him a periodic rest for recuperation. The Mosaic legislation, based upon the creation record, was particularistic in design and application. The same principles underlay the institution in the Decalogue, as in the creation record; but at the time of the introduction of Christianity the humanitarian design had been lost sight of and the Sabbath had been made an intolerable burden.

It was stated above that the idea of a particular day as "sacred" above all others was an impossibility in a universal institution on a round earth. That no such idea of special sacredness was carried over into Christianity is shown by the fact that while the seventh day of the week was widely observed at first by Jewish Christians, it gradually gave way to the first day, or "Lord's Day," which had already taken position as the day of social worship, "in the breaking of bread," for example.

What, then, should be our conception of the Sabbath?

(1) Banish all idea of a specially "sacred" section of the week, and regard all days as truly hallowed and as belonging to the Lord.

(2) Devote one-seventh of your time, as far as practicable, to recuperation of the forces of mind and body, and to the building up of your spiritual life. You will do more work, in the long run, working six days a week than seven, and your spiritual life be greatly edified in the way of this sabbatic spiritual culture.

(3) Since the Lord's Day, or Sunday, is the customary day for cessation from ordinary pursuits, adopt it as your sabbatic day for the reason that it is the day generally adopted, and for the further sentimental reason that it at least brings to mind the Resurrection of your Lord.

How may one best spend his sabbatic day? That must be determined, primarily, by the principles of physical recuperation and spiritual edification. How may I best restore strength lost through six days of work? And how may I best build up my spiritual life? To answer those questions is to answer the question of how to spend one's day of rest. To answer wisely will require prayerful care. Like questions of Christian liberty generally, the question of Sabbath observance is not made easier by being taken out of the region of law and placed in the domain of liberty.

I am sure that the view of the Sabbath here set forth is in harmony with Paul's view as indicated in our passage of Romans and elsewhere; and that it is also in harmony with what the Great Master, Jesus of Nazareth, taught about it. If I did not think so, I would not for one moment entertain it.

Chapter XXIX

BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF GOD

14: 10-12

A question of casuistry had arisen. It was concerning the eating of meat and the keeping of days. In the discussion the Apostle had risen from these particulars to the general principle that, living or dying, the disputants belonged to the Lord. In that general principle was lodged ample reason why they should not judge each other in these matters. Now, in the brief passage before us, he gives further reason why they should not judge each other. That reason was that all must stand before the judgment seat of God.

Paul himself was soon to stand before earthly tribunals—before Felix, before Festus, before Herod, before Cæsar. We do not know whether he had had any intimations of this. But he was sure that all would one day be obliged to stand before the tribunal of the Great Judge.

In his treatment of the matter here several facts appear. The first of these great facts is that there is to be a final Judgment. This is inevitable. It springs from the holiness of God. It should not be looked upon as a dragging of his creatures before his tribunal by a tyrant. Judgment is always going on. God could not be holy and not judge men. His holiness must discriminate unholiness. Men are obliged to judge. It is

true that Jesus said: "Judge not;" but it is also true that he said: "By their fruits ye shall know them." This last is, as a matter of fact, a judging of others; and it is to be reconciled with his prohibition of judgment by understanding Jesus to mean harsh, censorious, unjust, or uncharitable judgment. That sort is never to be indulged in; but judgment in the sense of discrimination between right and wrong, between good and bad, between true and false, is a sort of judgment that cannot be avoided; and Jesus, so far from prohibiting that sort of judgment, did really approve it when he said: "By their fruits ye shall know them." Such judgment is a moral necessity. Rain discriminates between rock and soil. Light discriminates between transparent, translucent, and opaque bodies. In like manner, God's holiness discriminates between righteousness and unrighteousness. This present, every-day, continuous discrimination will reach its climax, so far as outward manifestation is concerned, in the "Great Day."

Again, besides its inevitableness, the Judgment puts dignity upon man. It is because he is a moral being that he must be judged. If he were not moral he would not come under the discriminating quality of the divine holiness. A tiger tears a man to death. The tiger is shot down. He was not entitled to a trial. But a man kills a fellow man; and, if he gets what is due, he is brought into court and tried. He cannot be justly disposed of without a trial. The tiger could not be a murderer; the man could be. The trial puts dignity on the man. It sets him above the tiger. So the final Assize puts honor upon men.

Further the Judgment satisfies a demand in our minds for justice. There are many inequalities in human life as we know it. Injustice and oppression hold sway in many cases and over wide spaces. It must be so in a world of sin, where sinners are on probation. A rigid enforcement of justice on the part of the divine Ruler would leave practically no room for choice, and so no possibility of large development. Take family government as an example. Tell a boy that for a certain course he will *certainly* be whipped with a switch; for another course he will *certainly* be beaten black and blue; and that for still another course he will *certainly* be brained with a hatchet. Tell him that is all certain and immediate. No great man could be developed under that sort of family government. So in the divine government of the world, rigid, exact, immediate enforcement of justice is incompatible with probation. But there is in us a sentiment of justice which says there must be a time when all will be evened up. That demand is met by the fact revealed in our passage that there will be a Final Judgment.

A second great fact brought out in our passage is that all must be there—all must be at the Judgment. There is *no escape*. One cannot escape by sitting still and refusing to go. There is an august earthly assembly gathered in a great hall. You are expected to be there. You are in an adjoining room, sitting still and declining to go out. But presently a partition rolls up, and you are there! So, though a man may say that he will have nothing to do with the Judgment—that he will stay away—he will, nevertheless, find himself there. Death will roll up the partition, and he will be

there! He cannot escape by running away. Earthly tribunals may be escaped in that way, but not so with this Tribunal. We are on the River of Time. We are relentlessly borne towards the ocean of Eternity. Eventually we are out!

There is escape for *none*. None will be overlooked. No life is so obscure that it may be excused from the Judgment. Only a few can here be conspicuous. We are prone, therefore, to give especial attention to the conspicuous ones. Often we pass others by with little notice. But none will be passed by in the Judgment. That is enough to make it worth while for any angel to spend a lifetime, if he may prepare the most obscure and degraded inhabitant of a great city or of the most remote island of the sea for his appearance at the Great Assize!

A third great fact brought out in our passage is that each one is to give his own account. Here is individual responsibility. Paul was urging those people not to judge one another with regard to certain differences of opinion that had arisen. To enforce that exhortation he is pointing to the fact that each one would come up to be judged for himself by the Great Judge of all. Each one, therefore, was responsible for himself. The great lesson for every Christian is that he should see that his own life, in all its parts, should be what it ought to be. It is not an uncommon saying of men that they leave the religious side of the business to their wives. Nor is it an uncommon thing for children to depend, in some measure at least, upon the religion of their parents. In like manner, church members, in not a few cases, trust to some sacredness and

saving power inhering in the church. All are wrong! Each one is responsible for himself.

Here also is the importance of secret uprightness. It is told of Phidias that he was accustomed to polish the backs of his statues; and, asked why he did this, he replied: Because the gods see the backs. The Final Judgment which will take in every soul will make a complete revelation of the most secret thoughts and motives.

Here is further to be seen the supreme value of Christ. He is to be the Judge. It is of the greatest importance that each and every one should make of him a Friend! A Friend to be trusted, to be loved, to be obeyed, to be a companion all along the way to the Judgment!

Chapter XXX

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

14: 13-23

The Apostle is not yet through with the question of casuistry that was raised at the beginning of the fourteenth chapter of the Epistle. He has already brought it to the test of our being the Lords, whether living or dying, and to the test of a final Judgment at which every one must stand and render an account for himself. He now brings it to the test of the nature of the kingdom of God.

The doctrine of Christian liberty was never more strongly and clearly stated than by Paul. There were two reasons for his special care and clearness at this point. In the first place, he was God's Apostle to the Gentiles—chosen to break the bonds that bound the gospel to Judaism. In the second place, he was beset by teachers—men calling themselves Christians—whose effort was to rebind the gospel.

This doctrine of Christian liberty was carefully guarded—safeguarded—by Paul. There were two reasons for this also. In the first place, he foresaw that it might be perverted into license. It was susceptible of such perversion, and through all the Christian centuries it has been perverted in spite of the safeguards which Paul threw around it. In the second place, the false teachers with whom he was beset objected to the

doctrine and tried to discredit Paul on the ground that his doctrine of Christian liberty meant license.

Christian liberty comes to view in the discussion of this question of casuistry involved in eating meat and observing days. Indeed, it runs through and conditions the whole discussion. In the passage now before us it reappears in these words: "I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself; save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean to him it is unclean. . . . If because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died." That is to say, you are at liberty to eat meat; but if the exercise of that liberty should be a cause of stumbling on the part of another, then you are not walking in love, and are abusing your liberty. In such a case you can well give up your liberty and forego the meat; "for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

The kingdom of God, then, is not food and drink, but is character. Character is more important than food and drink, even though the food and drink be taken in the exercise of what one regards as his liberty; and character is involved in such use of liberty as will safeguard the interests of others.

The kingdom of God is not food, but character. The question of the influence of food upon character is not up for discussion. It is not denied that the physical basis of character is a matter of very great importance. We do well to study it. We cannot know too much about it. But still the kingdom of God is not the food, but the character.

Applying the principle laid down by the Apostle, we may hold with equal truth that the kingdom of God is not clothes, but character. It is not denied that there is a connection between clothes and character. A man may wear better clothes than he is able to pay for. In that case, the clothes injure his character. Or he may not wear as good clothes as he is able to wear and ought to wear. In that case, where is his pride? That wholesome pride, or self-respect, which is one of the elements of high character? But still the kingdom of God is not the clothes, but the character.

Applying the Apostle's principle still further, we may say that the kingdom of God is not money but character. It is not denied that money may be transmuted into character. Indeed, that is the only proper use of money. If material things are not made to contribute to the building of character they are misused and wasted. What use, for example, have I for a dollar? It may be said that I need it to buy food with. But what use have I for food? To support life? Yes, to support life. But why should my life be supported, why should I live? To build character and for no other reason. I am in this world to become God-like, as God-likeness has been shown to me by Jesus. I am to become like Jesus in character; and that of course involves the largest possible service to others. So it may be said without qualification that the only proper use of money, material things, is contribution in one way or another to the building of character. Nor, again, is it denied that the making and the managing of money may be evidence of certain good qualities. But, as money may be so used as to ruin character, so it may

be made by the exercise of bad qualities of character. In any case, the kingdom of God is not money, but character.

Still further, the kingdom of God is not culture, but character. There is an ungodly culture, a culture that carries men farther and farther away from God. It is true, on the other hand, that culture may be very beneficial to character. But the kingdom of God is not culture, but character.

Once more the kingdom of God is not birth or position. Sometimes we see men of what the world calls low birth rise to great nobility of character, while some of high birth develop the lowest and meanest traits. The kingdom of God is not birth or position, but character.

The Apostle enumerates some of the elements in the character that constitute the kingdom of God. They are: righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Righteousness! There are three kinds of righteousness: (1) before God; (2) in one's character; (3) with reference to one's fellow men. The first of these is the basis of the other two. Justified by God for Christ's sake we strive to realize rightness, straightness, in our innermost life; and we manifest that inward straightness by being straight in all our relations and dealings with others. We need not suppose that we are in the kingdom of God if we are crooked in our relations or dealings with other people!

Peace! We have peace with God. This is upon the basis of justification by grace through faith (Rom. 5: 1). The "wrath of God" has been rolled back. We are no longer under condemnation (Rom. 8: 1). The

peace of God which passeth all understanding is ours to guard our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7). We desire that peace shall reign everywhere. It is not peace, however, without righteousness. Diplomats say: "Peace with honor." The Christian says: "Peace with principle." Christ said that he came not to send peace but a sword. Just here is where we find his meaning. His teachings would arouse antagonism in a world awry with sin. In those cases his principles would not yield; and hence there would be conflict—a conflict which could not end until his principles should finally be triumphant. But the follower of Christ into whose heart has come that peace which he said he was leaving to his disciples, desires that peace shall everywhere reign. He desires with intense longing that wrong and strife shall yield to right and peace. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you" (John 14:27).

Joy in the Holy Spirit! This results from a realization by the believer of what has come to pass in his life. Condemnation is past! How can he fail to rejoice? How can he be long-faced? Sour? Discontented? Unhappy? Christian living is a serious but not a sour business.

Interpreters differ as to what Paul meant in this passage by the "kingdom of God." Some think that he meant the kingdom of God on earth; while others understand him to have meant the kingdom of God in heaven. I have taken the former view. But the two are intimately connected. Only those who belong to the kingdom here will be members there. A hog is

lying down in a bed of flowers—does he enjoy it? How, then, about a man in heaven who has lived a hog's life on earth? A man is on a rack, every muscle stretched in agony—could he enjoy a beautiful picture? How, then, about a man in heaven whose whole life here has been centered upon his own poor self? Two strings of an instrument are close together. Strike one; the other vibrates and sends forth an echo, faint it may be, of the other. So let a man place his soul with reference to God that it will vibrate with God's life and will send forth music that will be in harmony with the divine notes!

Chapter XXXI

THE STRONG TO BEAR THE INFIRMITIES OF THE WEAK

15: 1-13

With this passage of the Epistle Paul closes his discussion of the question of casuistry which was started at the opening of the fourteenth chapter.

The particular matters in question among the Roman Christians he considered morally indifferent; but the spirit of the brethren in dealing with those matters he regarded as of the greatest importance. As a matter of fact he thought that what may be called the liberal party were correct in their view of the question; but they must not always use their liberty, and, above all, they must not treat their stricter but conscientious brethren harshly or with contempt, calling them by such names as "narrow-minded" and "fogy," while these overscrupulous ones must not call the others "sinners" and "heathens" for not agreeing with them in their stricter notions.

Throughout the fourteenth chapter, in which Paul has been dealing with these contentions of the two parties, he *agrees* with the liberal party and *sympathizes* with the strict party. It may be that he felt that because the liberal party were right they could more easily afford to be charitable and to make concessions to the others. It is interesting, therefore, to

observe that the most of his effort for bringing about the right spirit and feeling among them is directed to the liberals. Finally, identifying himself with the liberals, he rises from the particulars involved in the local trouble to a general principle which laps back to meet the general principle to which he had risen in verses seven and eight of the fourteenth chapter. There the principle was that, whether we live or die "we are the Lord's;" here the principle stated in verse one of chapter fifteen is that "the strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." These two great principles underlie, run through, and cover the whole discussion of the question of casuistry that had been raised.

"We, then, that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." That, to the mind of the Apostle, was the "conclusion of the whole matter." The duty of the strong to the weak—that is the great conception involved in this great conclusion.

That there is a duty of the strong to the weak should be emphasized. This duty finds its foundation in several considerations that may be mentioned. The first of these is the value of human life. A weak brute is cared for in its weakness, in proportion to the promise there is in it of future usefulness. If a calf promises to become a good milker, great pains will be taken to give it the best opportunity for development. If a colt promises to become a good roadster or a winner in the races, he will not lack for the care that is necessary to bring out all that is in him. Such care is bestowed upon that which is perishing, upon that whose value may be estimated in perishing treasure. Our Lord said

to his disciples: "Ye are of more value than many sparrows." Likewise, it may be said that the weakest human being is of far greater value than the most valuable brute. The brute has only a temporal value, while the human being has an eternal value. The brute is only material; the man is also spiritual. The brute is only physical; the man is also moral. Man is the only creature of which the creation of it was said by the Creator to have been in his own image. And it was upon the ground that man was made in the image of God that the extreme penalty of death was fixed for murder; "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man." Man's moral, spiritual, immortal nature gives to him God's image; and it is the divine image that gives to human life its sanctity, dignity, value. Wherever you find a man, you find the image of God. No matter how marred the image may be, it has not been completely effaced. Hence, wherever you find a man, a human being, however weak or bad, you find a creature of God whose value you cannot estimate.

In heathen lands, the most civilized of their kind, men have been valued only by the service they could render the state, as a horse is valued by the number of miles he may travel in a given time, or by the number of pounds he can pull; or as a cow is valued by the number of gallons of milk she will yield. But the revelation of God gives to man a value irrespective of any service of any kind he may render in this life—a value based upon the single fact that he is made in the image of God. The weakest man possesses this value; and in it is found a basis for the duty to him that rests

upon the strong. As a man's business instinct leads him to bestow care upon a helpless brute that will be valuable, so his moral instinct ought to lead him to recognize his duty to help a weaker man who possesses the inestimable value that the image of God imparts.

The second of the considerations underlying the duty of the strong to the weak may be found in the brotherhood of man. All men are brothers. They have been fashioned by the same divine hand, and impressed with the same divine image. They have the same emotions—love, hope, fear, anger, and all the rest. This common nature establishes a bond of union and furnishes the basis for sympathy.

If we find a suffering brute, we feel for it—we wish to help and relieve it. We wish that, whether it will ever be of any service to us or not. We have in common with it an animal nature—a nature that is sensitive to physical pain. How much more we feel for a suffering human being! He is susceptible of sorrow—pain of soul as well as of body. We have, in common with him, that susceptibility to sorrow. We know how it is because we have felt it. The brute touches us at only one point. It is the point of animal organism. The man touches us at every point. He is like us all the way through.

This fellow feeling indicates the direction in which duty lies. It is a ground upon which the duty of the strong to the weak is based.

A third consideration is the dependence of the strong themselves. Ah, how small is the greatest man in this great creation! How weak is the strongest! How unwise is the wisest! The greatest, the strongest, the

wisest, all are dependent upon One who is greater, stronger, wiser than all. This dependence of the strong upon a stronger One establishes for them a duty to the weaker.

In what does this duty of the strong to the weak consist? Paul does not leave us in doubt. Nor would the teachings of Jesus leave us in doubt. The duty consists in bearing and forbearing—bearing burdens and forbearing infirmities.

There must be a forbearing of infirmities. This includes all sorts of infirmities; and their name is legion. Human nature at its strongest in its fallen condition has many weaknesses; and at its weakest the infirmities are, of course, more numerous and more manifest. Some of these infirmities are very hard to forbear. But the duty is laid upon every man to be forbearing with regard to his brother's weaknesses.

There is one caution that ought to be observed. The forbearance must not be of such a sort as to make the impression that infirmity is virtue, or that sin into which it allows men to fall is not sin. This caution being observed, it may be truly said that the Scriptures and the Spirit of Christ allow no limit to be placed upon the forbearance of the strong towards the infirmities of the weak.

There must also be bearing of burdens. Burdens seem to be very unequally distributed. One family have abundance of everything needed for ease and comfort, while another family apparently just as virtuous and industrious are cramped and even in want. Or two families may be equally well provided for; and, while one has sorrow upon sorrow, the other seems to

have no grief at all. Sometimes the sorrows come to those who have the hardest lot in life.

As the burdens seem to be unequally distributed, so also does the power to bear them. Often the man who has many and great burdens is less prepared to bear them than another who is not so burdened.

It is the duty of him who is better able to bear burdens to help his fellow men who are less able. He must help his weaker brother to carry his load of sorrow, as best he can, and help him in his struggle to get along in the world.

Here, also, a caution is to be observed. Help should be real help—help that helps, and not help that harms. If you undertake to help your brother bear his burden of sorrow it is possible to cause him to bow lower under the load instead of getting straighter—he may whine, instead of sing. Or, if you undertake to help him in his struggle to get along, you may weaken his hand instead of strengthening it. Your help may be given in such a way as to make him depend upon help instead of upon himself. This caution observed, the strong man's duty to help his weaker brother bear burdens is measured only by his strength.

What are some of the results of a proper discharge of the duty of the strong to the weak? First among these results may be mentioned the fact that the strong are themselves made stronger. Anything that brings into action what is best in a man will be sure to make him better. An invariable law of our nature makes it so. It is just as certain as the action of the law of gravitation. Work increases capacity for work; endurance increases capacity to endure. So the man who

helps his brother to lift has his own power to bear burdens increased; and he who forbears the infirmities of others has his power of endurance augmented. "Rather trying sometimes are the infirmities of the weak," you may say. "Very trying is a continual touchiness in a neighbor, or the constant recurrence of the same faults in your children. But, if by self-restraint and right treatment, you should be able by God's help to cure those faults, how much would be accomplished not only for them but also for yourself! It is a case where the physician in trying to cure the patient cures himself. In dealing properly with the bad temper of another, for example, you are obliged to conquer your own. In trying to cure him of sullenness, self-indulgence, petulance, you are driven to God to beg for your own spirit a larger supply of sweetness, generosity, long-suffering, and all those radiant graces which in such a struggle make the sun-like Christian more than conqueror."

Another result of the discharge by the strong of their duty to the weak is that many weak are made strong. It must not be said that *all* will be made strong. Some will not be made so no matter what is done for them, just as some of the unsaved will not be saved, no matter how much gospel preaching or what kind they may hear, even though the preaching were done by a Paul or Jesus himself—even though "one should rise from the dead." But *many* weak will thus be made strong.

Often forbearance will cure a man of an infirmity where no amount of harshness would do anything but confirm him in it. Often a little help judiciously ex-

tended to one who is struggling will so encourage him and give him such mastery of his situation that he will conquer where without such timely help he would have given up in despair.

What are some of the motives to a proper discharge of this duty of the strong to the weak? The results just mentioned ought to furnish incitement enough to any one who loves his fellow men, or who cares for the development of what is best in himself. If he will be made stronger by the discharge of his duty to those who are weaker than himself, and if the weaker will be made stronger thereby, what more inducement should he need, supposing that he loves his fellow men and cares for the development of what is best in himself?

But to the Christian the love of Christ, above everything else, is the motive to the discharge of this, as of all other duties. Paul recognized that when he wrote: "We, then, that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." And not to please ourselves! Very clearly with those words he connected these: "For even Christ pleased not himself." He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He came, the stronger, to bear the infirmities of the weak. By his stripes we are healed. This love of Christ, begetting an answering love in our hearts, constrains us to follow his example; to prefer to minister rather than to be ministered unto; to give rather than to receive; to regard the truest greatness as found in the power to serve in resources given without impoverishment; to consider it a blessed thing that the disciple be as his Master and the servant as his Lord!

And not to please ourselves! It has been well said:

Self-pleasing always tends to meanness of character. It is against all that we understand by nobleness, magnanimity, courage, honor. It is against all the public virtues, such as patriotism, benevolence, and the charities of life. Self-pleasing is enormously difficult to self that is always seeking to be pleased, so difficult as to be ultimately quite impossible of realization. More and yet more is to be had until more cannot be had. Better and yet better and alas! better will not come. And Christian people should be always on their guard against this thing. There is no one whom it will not beset. The vivacious will have it presented to them in the forms of excitement and amusement, which, if indulged in, will draw them away from the important duties of daily life, as well as from some of the severer duties of Christian service. The quiet and retiring will have it presented to them in the forms of sloth and ease. The busy will have it presented to them in the form of avarice and ambition and fame and honor. In fact, all the vices and all the faults are but different dresses which the old self puts on, as it goes up and down the world, murmuring: We ought to please ourselves! Let us beware of falling into the soft and easy habit of pleasing self. Please the higher self, and welcome. Please the love that lies sleeping in you. Please the power, the sensibilities, the charities of the Christian life. Then, not you alone, but the angels and God himself will be pleased. But as to pleasing the other self, that second you, that meaner creature you sometimes find yourself lapsing into, all danger and all soul-death lie that way. It is surely no irreverence to follow the figure that has been given us, and say: Let

that man be crucified; put nails into his hands and feet; pierce that cold black heart with the spear. The blessed Saviour died in his love and purity, and rose again, that that dark man of sin might die forever.

PART VIII
CONCLUSION.

15: 14—16: 27

Chapter XXXII

A CONTEMPLATED VISIT

15: 14-33

The Introduction and the Conclusion of this Epistle form what may be considered an envelope, enclosing the great doctrinal-practical treatise. As the Introduction contained two sections (that is, a Salutation and an Apology), so the Conclusion contains two sections (that is, an Apology and Salutations combined with commendation, warning, and benediction).

In this chapter we take up the section which contains the Apostle's concluding apology. In that apology is imbedded a contemplated visit to Rome. Comparing 15: 14-33 with 1: 8-15, one cannot fail to be struck by the similarity of the two passages. In the introductory passage we see the high character of the Roman Christians, the universal mission of Paul and his longing to make a visit to Rome. In the concluding passage we see the same items differently expressed and the desired visit becoming more definitely an expected one.

The delicacy of feeling that characterized the great Apostle manifested itself on every suitable occasion. He desired to place this noble exposition of "his gospel" in the heart of the then universal Empire, whose capital was on the Tiber. In that imperial city was a band of Christians, a church of Christ. The church had not been planted by him, though some of his chil-

dren in the gospel, settling in Rome, may have been among its first members. As he was not its founder he felt that some apology for writing them would be proper. He felt so when he wrote the introductory verses, and he felt so as he came to write the Conclusion. A fine instinct led him to preface this concluding apology with a gracious recognition of the high character of those Christians for goodness and Christian intelligence. The same fine instinct led him to characterize his great and enduring treatise: "In a measure as reminding them." And his whole approach to them he justified upon the ground that he was divinely appointed to be "a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles"—ministering the gospel of God in order that the Gentiles, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, might be an offering acceptable to God. In that work to which he was appointed he had been blessed with great success, having been enabled to take the gospel as far east as Illyricum.

Hitherto the work in the East had prevented his longed-for visit to Rome; but now the time seems to be approaching for the realization of his cherished purpose. He had made a very wide circuit in the East; he could now go West, with Spain as his goal and Rome on the way. There was, however, one special service that would take him to Jerusalem before he could go West. It was to bear an offering of Gentile churches to the poor saints at Jerusalem. This was a matter that lay close to the Apostle's heart. There must have been considerable need. We can see why it was so. Jerusalem was the hot-bed of Jewish hate against Christians. Here Jesus was crucified as a result of Jewish hatred of him. Those who became his disciples were early sub-

jected to fierce persecution, as the stoning of Stephen and the mad career of Saul of Tarsus perpetually testify. This policy of blood and imprisonment would naturally be accompanied or followed by a milder, though scarcely less cruel, policy of economic boycott. This latter alone would bring distress to many Christian families. It was right, the Apostle held, that Gentile Christians should thus help their needy brethren at Jerusalem; for it was through Jewish Christian ministry that the Gentiles had received the spiritual blessing of the gospel; and it was now due that these Gentile Christians should minister in material goods to needy Jewish Christians.

The Apostle anticipated trouble at Jerusalem. In his address to the Ephesian elders at Miletus he said that in every city the Holy Spirit indicated that bonds and afflictions awaited him; at Tyre, on the same journey to Jerusalem, the disciples there warned him not to set foot in Jerusalem; and, at Cæsarea, while still on his way to Jerusalem, he was told by a prophet, Agabus, that he would be bound and delivered to the civil power. He also feared that the Judaizing Christians might have so succeeded in filling the minds of other Jewish Christians at Jerusalem with prejudice against him that the offering from the Gentile churches might not be acceptable. Anticipating these troubles, the Apostle urges the Christians at Rome to agonize with him in prayer that he might be delivered from the disobedient in Judea, and that the offering might be acceptable to the saints.

The Apostle was, indeed, to go to Rome; but it was not as he had desired. To Jerusalem he went with his

offering from the Gentile churches, which he fondly hoped might be a bond uniting the two sections of infant Christendom. What he feared, and what the Holy Spirit had indicated, came to pass with respect to afflictions and bonds. His life sought by the mob and by conspiracy, he was taken in custody of the Roman power; and, after two years' imprisonment at Cæsarea, Felix and then Festus, playing politics with his case, he appealed to Cæsar, and under that appeal was sent to Rome for trial.

So, in the providence of God, the gospel of a righteousness of God for unrighteous men, not only in a great written document, but also in the person of the mightiest of all the Apostles, reached the Imperial City, the heart of the civilized world of that day!

Chapter XXXIII

COMMENDATION, SALUTATION, WARNING, DOXOLOGY

16: 1-27

COMMENDATION

Paul was at Corinth on his third great missionary journey. Cenchreæ was the port of Corinth on the Ægean Sea. Phœbe was a deaconess of the church of Cenchreæ. She was about to make a visit to Rome. Paul sent by her this great Epistle to the Roman Christians.

The Apostle bases his commendation of Phœbe upon several interesting grounds:

1. He says she is "our sister;" that is, his sister and theirs. Paul, a man of Tarsus in Asia, this good woman of Cenchreæ in Greece, and these people at Rome in Italy—three groups, widely separated in more ways than one, are so brought together that Phœbe is "sister" to the other two groups, and Paul commends her to the Romans on that ground. Great is the bond that unites people in Christ!

2. He calls Phœbe a "deaconess." The word he here uses, rendered "servant," is the word used by him to designate deacons in Philippians 1:1 and in 1 Timothy 3:8. Phœbe was doubtless an official "servant," a deaconess, set apart by the church at Cenchreæ to render ministries such as Paul attributes to her. If

any church should regard deaconesses as needful or useful, there is certainly no good reason why such official servants should not be set apart for the needed ministries.

3. He says that Phœbe had helped many, including himself. She had "stood before" them. That particular expression in this connection seems to mean that she had helped in the way of protection and guidance. Maybe she had nursed many sick, giving them that sort of protection against disease, and had given advice to many, guiding them thus in the right way of life; and it is not improbable that she had nursed the Apostle through a spell of sickness. Phœbe was a sister in Christ, she was an honored servant of the church at Cenchreæ, and she had done much good; and upon these grounds the Apostle commended her to the Christians at Rome.

His commendation of her had a practical design. He desired that the Roman Christians should accord to her a worthy reception and should "stand by" her in whatever matter she might need their assistance. He desired that their reception of her should be worthy of her and worthy of themselves. They owed something to her in the matter, and they owed something to themselves. They were "saints" and she was a "saint;" and they owed it to themselves, therefore, to receive her as "saints" ought to receive a "saint." Furthermore, one who had given protection against sickness and want to so many, and who had given guidance to so many, deserved that those who were able to do so should help her to set forward any work in which she might need assistance.

SALUTATION

In verses three to sixteen we have a series of injunctions from the Apostle that salutation be conveyed to certain individuals and groups. It would be tedious to take these up seriatim and deal with each individual or group. A few observations of a more general sort may be ventured.

The first case may be taken as, in a measure, typical. Salutation is to be conveyed to Prisca and Aquila. These people had been of great service to the Apostle. He had first met them during his second missionary journey at Corinth. They were tent-makers, and, though natives of Pontus in Asia, had been established in business at Rome and had been obliged to leave the capital of the great Empire under the edict of the Emperor Claudius expelling all Jews from Rome. They had come to Corinth; and when Paul visited that city, being of the same trade, he joined himself to them. It is probable that through this business connection with them he was enabled to lead them to Christ. They became devoted friends and earnest and efficient helpers of the Apostle in his great work of setting forward the kingdom of Christ. When he left Corinth, on his return trip to Jerusalem and Antioch, these friends and helpers went with him as far as Ephesus and wrought there after he resumed his journey eastward. By the time of the writing of this Epistle from Corinth on the next and last great missionary journey they had returned to Rome, the edict of Claudius having no doubt meantime fallen into harmless ineffectiveness.

Paul says that these friends were not only his fellow

workers, but that for his life they had "laid down their own necks," which must mean that they had risked their lives for him. He also indicates that their labors and sacrifices had been so notable that the Gentile churches generally recognized obligation to them.

The other individuals and groups here named, on account of some service rendered or some association with the Apostle, were entitled to special recognition, to honorable mention. No doubt the Epistle would be read in the assembly of the church, and these salutations would be conveyed in that public way. The Apostle evidently thought that devotion to the kingdom of Christ, manifesting itself in service, should have recognition. Thus we have conspicuous apostolic example for praising the people who serve faithfully and well in the great business of extending and establishing our Lord's kingdom among men.

This gracious recognition of devotion and service is rounded out by an injunction from the Apostle that all the members of the church at Rome salute each other with a holy kiss, and by the assurance that all the churches salute the church to which he is writing. Loving fellowship among the members of a church and loving fellowship of the churches one for another!

In verses twenty-one to twenty-three, salutations are conveyed from individuals who are with Paul to the church at Rome. They are earnest men associated with him; and, knowing that he is writing to the church in the Roman capital, they wish to send greeting to the brethren in Christ that are living in the great metropolis. An interesting personal matter comes to view when Paul's amanuensis puts in a word for himself

and says: "I, Tertius, who write the Epistle, salute you in the Lord."

WARNING

In verses seventeen to twenty the Apostle sounds a warning against false teachers who cause divisions and give occasion for stumbling. We should remember that the period of his ministry, out of which came the Galatian, Corinthian, and Roman Epistles, was the period of his great contest with Judaizers for the purity of the gospel. These Judaizers were Jews who professed discipleship to Christ but treated Christianity as a sort of adjunct to Judaism, or a new phase of it. To become a Christian one must come, they thought, by the way of Judaism. He must submit to the requirements of the Jewish ceremonial law. They trailed Paul with this false teaching; and, in order to be able to supplant "his gospel" of salvation by grace through faith alone, apart from works of the law, they undertook to undermine his apostolic authority by representing him to be a sort of second-hand Apostle, dependent upon Peter and the other apostles at Jerusalem. Already these false teachers had appeared at Corinth and in Galatia, and he was compelled to have what we may call a stand-up fight with them. The fame of the faith and obedience of the Roman Christians had become widely known in the Empire; and Paul was sure that these false teachers would be attracted hither, if, indeed, they had not already begun their destructive work. So he sounds a note of warning. He tells what sort of people these teachers are;

and he shows what should be the general attitude of these Christians. They are to be "wise unto that which is good and simple unto that which is evil." There is to be no parley with evil. They know the true gospel, received from men and women who had received it from him; now, in this Epistle they will have that gospel clearly and succinctly stated and carefully expounded and defended; and hence they will not be in doubt as to the truth. Knowing the truth, they will promptly turn away from error. The simplicity of their attitude will be that of a clear understanding of the truth, which, without hesitation, rejects the opposite error; and wisdom will lay hold of the truth and with discretion will serve the truth.

In that great contest of Paul with the Judaizers, he cut the bonds with which they sought to bind the gospel of Christ to Judaism; and the Corinthian, Galatian, and Roman Epistles are abiding literary monuments of the great conflict and should for all time constitute a Gibraltar of defense against the rebinding or corruption of the gospel. Let all erring Christendom come back to the simple gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone! This it is that is to conquer. "This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith." "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet."

DOXOLOGY

The great doctrinal division was brought to a close (11:36) with a doxology. Now the entire document closes with a doxology. In the onrush of the Apostle's

thought and emotion, he creates a difficulty for the interpreter. He begins with ascribing power to God for establishing these Christians according to the standard of the gospel, and then ascribes to him supreme wisdom—"the only wise God." To this last description, "the only wise God," he adds the expression, "through Jesus Christ;" and, immediately after that clause, according to the best Greek text, he says: "To whom be glory forever." The most natural reference of the "whom" is to Jesus Christ. If that be taken as the correct reference, then the ascription of glory is not to the "only wise God," but to "Jesus Christ." Let it be so. Then what did the Apostle mean should refer to "him who is able to establish you" and to "the only wise God"? And what is the meaning of the clause "through Jesus Christ"? The greatest exegetical scholars are here at variance. Meyer, one of the greatest of them all, would have the Apostle mean that the wisdom of God is manifested through Jesus Christ, and that the "whom" refers to the One "who is able to establish you" and who is "the only wise God," and that the ascription of glory is to him. It does not seem allowable, however, to accept that construction. But rather this should be taken to represent the real operation of the mind of the Apostle: He has in view the ascription of glory to the One "who is able to establish you"—"the only wise God;" but all we offer, as well as all we receive, is "through Jesus Christ;" when that conception of Jesus Christ leaps into expression, he exclaims: "to whom be glory forever." He did not hesitate thus to change the terminus of his thought, because to him Christ was God.

Thus the great Apostle brings to its conclusion this greatest of all Christian documents. He has stated, expounded, defended, and applied what he calls "my gospel"—the gospel of salvation by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ. He identifies that gospel with preaching Christ. So it is. Jesus Christ our Redeemer and Lord has never had a better exponent than Paul. To preach Paul's Gospel is certainly to preach Jesus Christ. This gospel had been "kept in silence," throughout the ages hitherto, but was now manifested. The "mystery" was now unveiled. This gospel had been foreshadowed, indeed, in the prophets, but not until the fulness of the time for the appearance of Jesus Christ was it brought into full manifestation.

As he dictates the last words of the monumental document, his great mind and heart are occupied with two things, that is, with desire that these Christians may be established in all that "his gospel" stands for, and with praise to the Divine Author of so wonderful a gospel—the gospel of a righteousness of God for unrighteous men.



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